


ST. JOHNS, N.F.L.D.      DEC 12 1901      POLDHU

# SPARKS JOURNAL

\*\*\* SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS, INC. \*\*\*





**RECORDING THE EARLY HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIRELESS**

VOLUME 7, NO. 2 [ DECEMBER 1984 ]

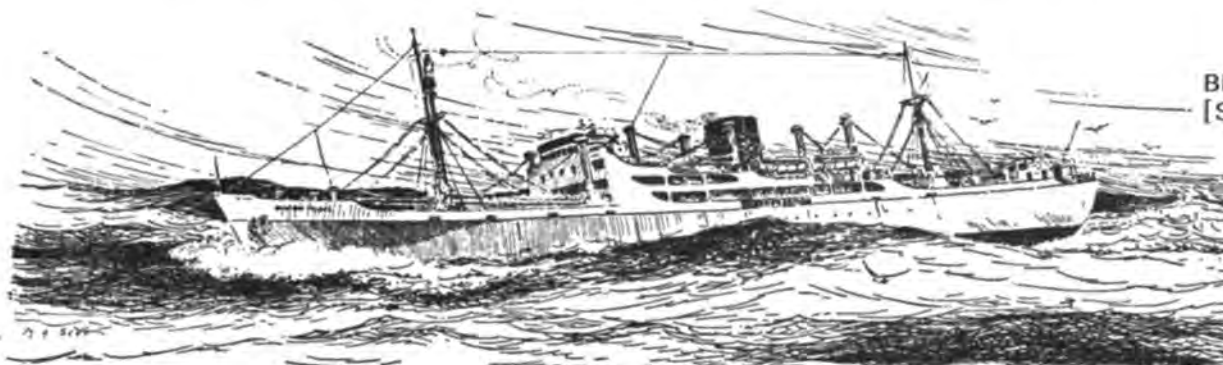
- QUARTERLY -

BLUE PETER EDITION

## "WIRELESS" - Brought the World A New Dimension in Living

IT'S "MAGIC" NEVER WANES IN PROVIDING

INFINITE HELP, SERVICE, COMMUNICATIONS, ENTERTAINMENT, ET CETRA



BLUE PETER  
[Stand by to Sail]

### How Wireless Has Served the Sea

Sixteen Years of Triumphant Achievements of an Unerring System and a Brave Devotion to Duty

A REMARKABLE record of achievement is presented by wireless telegraphy since the service was first utilized in controlling the forces of nature for the benefit of mankind. It shows what the aerial message has done to safeguard lives on board vessels disabled by storm or mishap; that come into collision in the ocean fog; that are wrecked on rocks or swept ashore. It shows how fire in midocean has been robbed of much of its historic dread and how rescue is brought to the helpless victims of warfare on merchant ships.



In no single instance on record has the Marconi system failed of its purpose, and even where sea or storm or fire or collision have temporarily disabled the apparatus, it has been quickly set aright and its intended work fulfilled.

All through this serial story of the sea's happenings runs the record of men living up to the traditions of the Marconi service. The list of such men who bravely gave up their lives to duty tells a story of courage amid difficulty and danger, of men who braved death to save the lives of others, men who were the last to leave the sinking ship.

The first recorded use of the wireless in rendering assistance to a ship endangered by collision, was on March 3, 1899, when the steamship R. F. Matthews ran into the East Goodwin Lightship. This accident was reported by wireless telegraphy to the South Foreland Lighthouse, and lifeboats were promptly sent to the relief of the lightship. It was an incident of small

importance in itself, yet a harbinger of great deeds to come.

Years passed, and then suddenly occurred one of the greatest shipwrecks of modern times—one, indeed, in which the Marconi wireless service first impressed its overwhelming importance upon the public mind, through being the means of saving nearly 1,500 lives.

With thirty feet of her bow cut away, the Italian steamship Florida, of the Lloyd Italiano Line, came slowly into the port of New York on January 25, 1909. Three days before, near Nantucket, she had run down and sunk the White Star liner Republic. The Baltic, also of the White Star Line, brought the survivors of both steamships into port. Thanks to the utility of the ether-waved call for aid, it was a story of lives saved rather than of lives lost.

The collision occurred in a dense fog shortly before six o'clock in the morning, while both vessels were out of their courses. While the passengers were huddled on the deck of the Republic, water pouring into a rent in her port side, one whose task was all-important was John W. (Jack) Binns, Marconi operator, to whom the survivors owed the swift summoning of distant ships, and the world owed what news it received within a few hours of the collision. A few moments after the Florida faded back into the mist whence she had come, the air above the ship was transmitting the code signal C Q D, which apprised the world of what had happened. The Re-

public's whistle kept going, and this brought the Florida back out of the fog to the aid of the vessel she had wounded. The passengers were then transferred to the Florida.

On board the Republic there remained only the Captain, the second officer, the boat's crew and the Marconi operator. Distant vessels, which had picked up the call for aid, were guided by Binns to the scene of the accident. And the cheering news had gone out to the world that the passengers were safe, the ships had not sunk and that there was no immediate danger. The wireless told its story all the livelong day and well into the night, until the electricity in the storage batteries gave out. The dynamos had gone when the engine room was flooded. But the great Baltic then hove in sight, and the Gresham from Wood's Hole.

The world was forced to marvel at the now historical story told by Captain Ransom, of the Baltic. "We got notice at six o'clock on Saturday morning," said the Captain, "that the Republic had been in collision and needed assistance, and we turned. We went back and commenced the search. It began at eleven o'clock and continued until eight at night. She was found finally by means of wireless. She heard our whistle and steered toward us, guided by wireless. As fast as our Marconi operator got a message, he rushed it to me. I have all the copies. One of them reads: 'You are now on our port bow. Can you see us? Republic.' Other messages read: 'You are now very close. Can you see our rockets? Republic. Steer east-southeast. Listen to our bell. Republic.'

"It was a sort of blindman's buff, with the wireless messages coming, 'Now you are hot, and now you are cold.'"

The Republic rescue stands out in the lay mind as the first collision at sea to receive wireless aid.

Only two days previously, on January 20, the steamship Hamilton, of the Old Dominion Line, had been in collision with a car barge of the New York, Philadelphia & Norfolk Railroad, in Hampton Roads. The distress call was sent out by wireless, and soon after tugs were towing the badly battered steamer back to port. Then, on March 10, blanketed by a dense fog and proceeding at half speed, the coastwise steamship of the Maine Steamship Company, the Horatio Hall, Portland for New York, and the H. F. Dimock, of the Metropolitan Line, New York for Boston, met in the middle of the narrow channel known as Pollock



Jack Binns, to whom the survivors of the Republic owe the swift summoning of rescue ships

Rip Slue, with a crash that sent the Hall to the bottom within half an hour and caused the Dimock to run ashore six hours later on Cape Cod Beach. The two steamships, looming out of the fog, had met in a crushing jar, the sharp nose of the Dimock going through the side of the Portland boat. The wireless operator on the sinking Hall managed to transmit a brief message calling for aid, and then the passengers on the Hall were dragged to the deck of the Dimock, which began to list. Six hours of silence ensued, during which half a hundred wireless stations, commercial, government and amateur along the coast from Portland to New London, endeavored to obtain news of the accident. Revenue cutters, scouring the waters





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Non-profit Historical Organization

*Society of Wireless Pioneers, Inc.*

Founded 1968 by William A. Breniman

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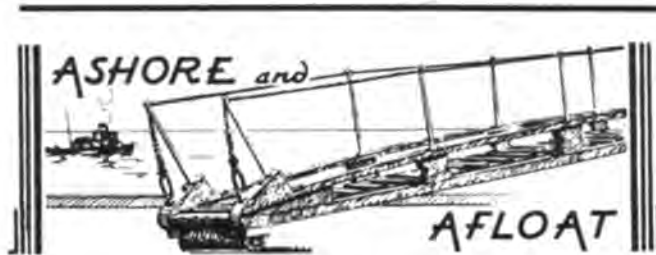
**Early Days of The Wireless**



*The 'Blue Peter' Edition*

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4.	United States Steamship Lines ( 4- pages of ship pictures)
8.	"We shall always remember"former officers, dedicated to SOWP.
9.	Skipper's Log continued. Radio Club of America Awards.
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28.	Fleet "EPIRB" - Paul L. Schmidt: Picture of White Star Fleet.
29.	Four-panel cartoon by "Radio Rex" (Gilson V.H. Willets)
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32.	LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE - Bill Deacon VE3BD0
35.	(Poem) "Voice of the Night - John Avine Nash; WHO DECIDED and WHY ? Donald K. deNeuf: It Happened 25 Years Ago. WA "OBSERVATIONS" My 50 years as a 'Pro'. - Harry A. Maclaren
36.	The Heritage of a Proud Society
39.	SOWP Chapters and Members. Capital Area and Pickerill.
40.	The Sea takes its Toll. Picture of the SS Morro Castle by Member T. W. Braidwood. Picture ATLANTIC CONVOY from painting by Tekening van J.H. Kerkhoff and poem by Jan. Noordergraaf



**EXPRESSIONS OF YOUR EDITOR:**

**MY THANKS**

Members everywhere in life  
from every walk and station.  
From every town and city  
and every state you'd mention—  
Have written me so many things  
of happenings thro' the year.  
I couldn't begin to count them all  
or even make them clear . . .  
I only know I owe so much  
to members everywhere  
And as I put my thoughts in verse  
it's just a way to share  
The meditations of my thankful heart,  
a heart much like your own,  
For little that I think or write  
is mine and mine alone . . .  
So if you found some interest  
in any word or line,  
It's just "Your Soul's Reflection"  
In "Proximity with Mine."





# Society Founder Honored by Radio Club of America

## Ralph Batcher Award "Historiographer of the Year"



1950 - Deputy Chief, Communications Division  
Civil Aeronautics Administration  
**William A. Breniman**

THE SKIPPER'S  
**Log**

### Rough Log - 'Ye Ancient Mariner's Travels

I believe our members will be interested in a trip my wife, Ruth, and I took last November which was made primarily to accept the "Ralph Batcher" Award of The Radio Club of America. The Batcher Award, as mentioned in the last issue of the Journal, in an honor conferred .. 'for assisting substantially in preserving the History of Radio and the Electronic mode of Communications.

When Mr. Fred Link, President of the Radio Club first informed me of my selection for the honor last August, I was reluctant to commit myself in making the trip to New York due to the heavy workload at HQ. Along with routine business, we were working on the 1985 Amateur Radio Call Book in addition to this issue of Sparks Journal, underway.

I gave much thought to President Link's invitation to accept the award in person. With due humility, I felt that I could only accept the honor unless shared with our members since much of the martial and historical data I have used has been furnished by them and I had served only to assemble copy and publish in acceptable form. On this basis I decided to accept and share the honor with Society members as it will benefit our Society in many intangible ways.

To members not acquainted with the Radio Club of America, I would like to tell you that they are the ..."oldest Radio Club in America, having been founded in 1909. Their interests in the very early days of wireless were in the amateur field - a wonderful field for research and experimentation. hence many of the early members became inventors, scientists and entrepreneurs who had foresight and faith that their hobby, someday, would help establish a new era of life. Many went on



President Fred M. Link [left] Radio Club of America presents Founder William A. Breniman, Society of Wireless Pioneers, Inc., with the first autographed copy of the RCoFA's "DIAMOND JUBILEE" Year Book at their Awards Banquet at the New York Athletic Club on Nov. 16 1984.

to fame and fortune, in fact it is said that these early members of the RCoFA were responsible and contributed more than 80 percent of the improvements and growth in the communications field.

When I informed Mr. Link that I would accept the award in person, many of my Wireless and Airway friends learned of my decision to make the trip East. It was not long before I received invitations to attend meetings of the Capital Area and Pickerill Chapters which a slight change in itinerary would accommodate. Additionally, the Washington Wing of the Airway Pioneers, an organization I founded in 1958 changed their meeting date in Falls Church so I could attend.

With the foregoing prelude as background, Ruth and I flew east on one of World Airway's DC-10s, Nov. 7th after leaving stewardship of the Society in the trusty hands of Elmer Burgman and Lorin DeMerritt.

(Continued on Page 9)



75th ANNUAL DINNER AND AWARDS PRESENTATION  
NEW YORK ATHLETIC CLUB  
NOVEMBER 16, 1984

STANDARD STUDIOS  
NEW YORK

Radio Club of America's Banquet and Awards Presentation Nov.16,1984 at The N.Y.A.C. New York City



# THE UNITED STATES LINES

BY- DON THOMAS-1340-SGP

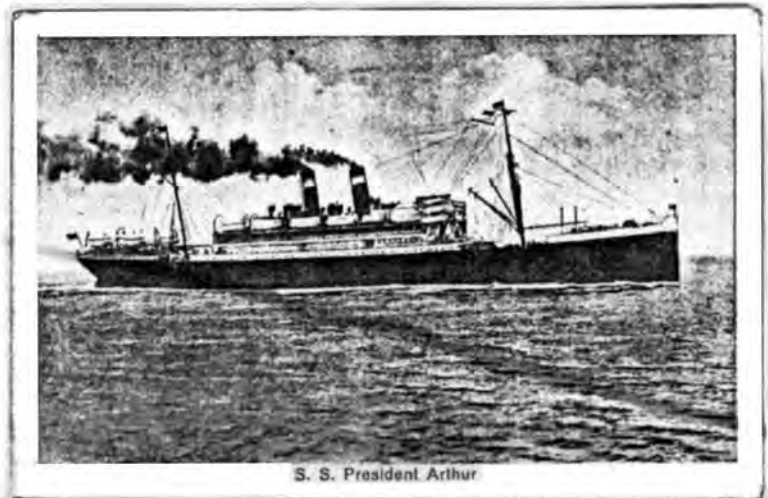


Although the American Line steamers "City of New York" and "City of Paris" were plying the North Atlantic before the turn of the century, it was not until after the end of the first World War that the United States seriously entered the North Atlantic steamer trade. This was when the U. S. government found itself with a fleet of large ex-German liners which had been interned in U. S. ports since 1914. The Amerika had been at Boston, the George Washington, Hamburg, President Grant and Vaterland at New York, and the Prinzess Alice at Manila. There were other large ex-German transports, used as troopships during the War, but the above-named were put into use by the Shipping Board. Used as troopers since 1917, they were in poor condition. However, after extensive refitting, most entered Transatlantic passenger service to Ireland, England, France, Germany and Italy, in 1920, for the United States Mail SS Co., which soon went broke.

In 1921 the UNITED STATES LINES was founded to act as general agents for the U.S. Shipping Board. These ship photographs are from colored postcards in the author's collection. 1929 schedule & brochure shown.



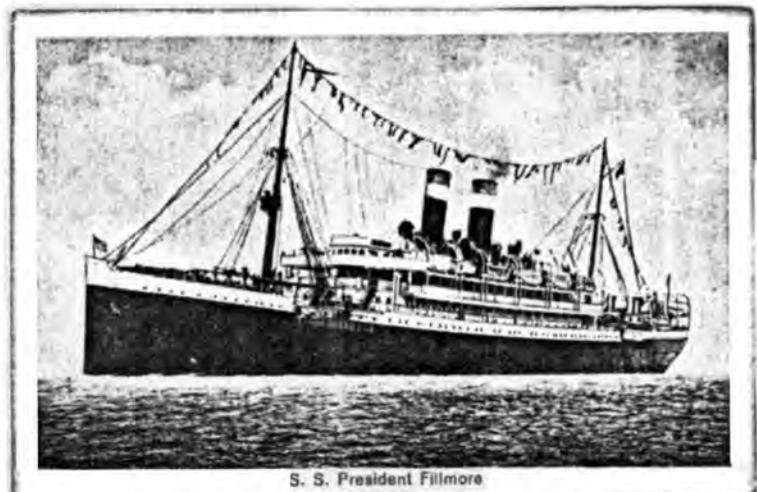
**PRINCESS MATOIKA** - - (1900-1933) 10,421 523x60 16K. Launched as **KIAUTSCHOU**, renamed **PRINZESS ALICE** 1903. First voyage as **PRINCESS MATOIKA** in March, 1921 N.Y.-ITALY for U.S. Mail SS Co. Taken over by U.S. Lines, August, 1921 and renamed **PRESIDENT ARTHUR**.



**PRESIDENT ARTHUR - WES** - (1900-1933) 10,680 523x60 16K ex-Kiautschou, ex-Prinzess Alice, ex-Princess Matoika. Renamed **PRESIDENT ARTHUR** in August 1921. Transatlantic service in 1922. Renamed **CITY OF HONOLULU**, 1924, and put in Pacific service.



**HUDSON** - - (1899-1928) 9,699 499x60 16K. Built as the **HAMBURG** for Far East trade. Interned N.Y. 1914, seized 1917. Ex-**POWHATAN**, ex-**NEW ROCHELLE**. Transferred to U.S. Lines in August 1921. Renamed **PRESIDENT FILLMORE** in 1922.

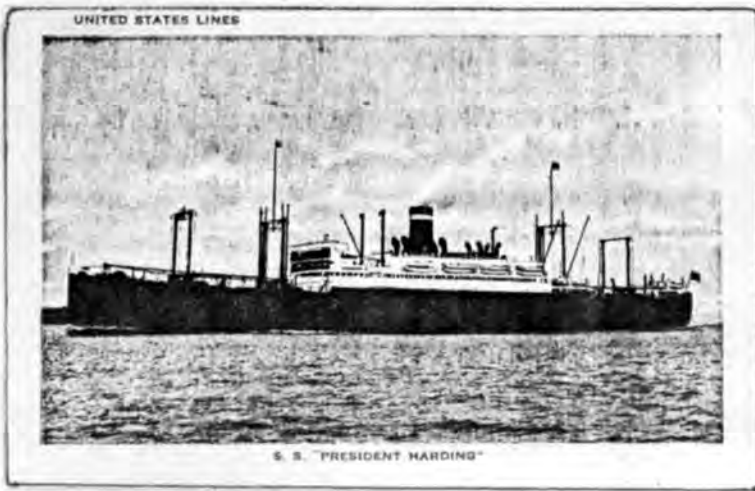


**PRESIDENT FILLMORE** - - (1899-1928) 10,532 499x60 16K. Ex-**HUDSON**. Commenced Transatlantic service as **PRESIDENT FILLMORE** in 1922 for U.S. Lines. Sold to the Dollar Line in 1924. Scrapped in 1928.

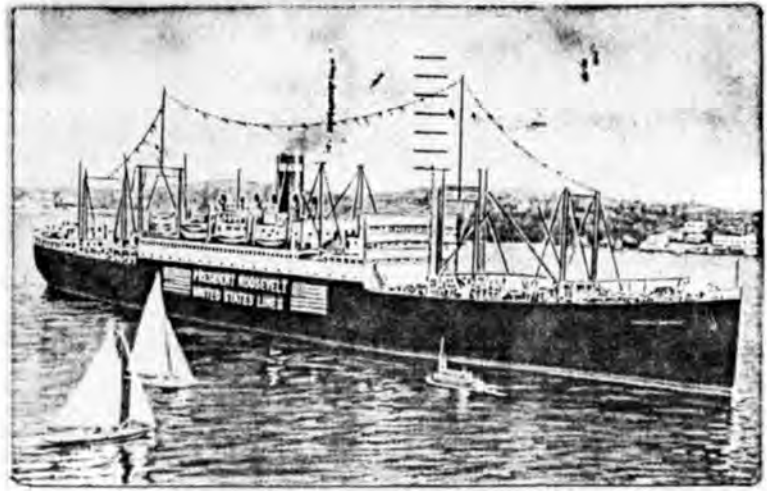


Baggage labels used by U.S. LINES. The letters indicated passenger's last name, so that they could look for their baggage on the dock under that letter.

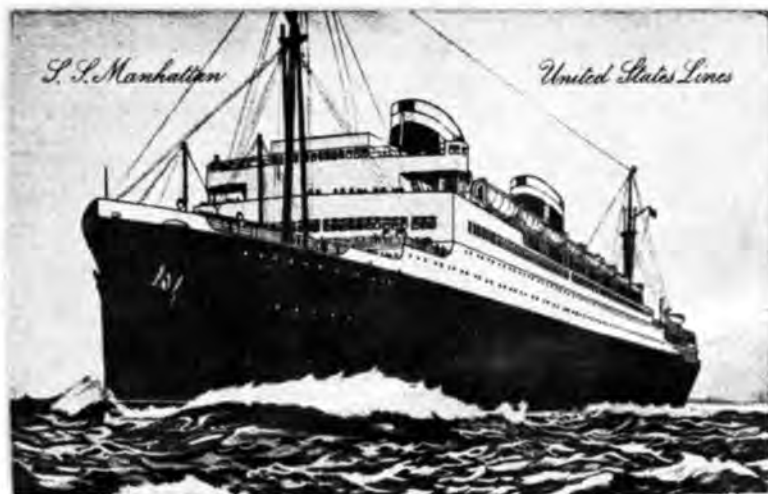




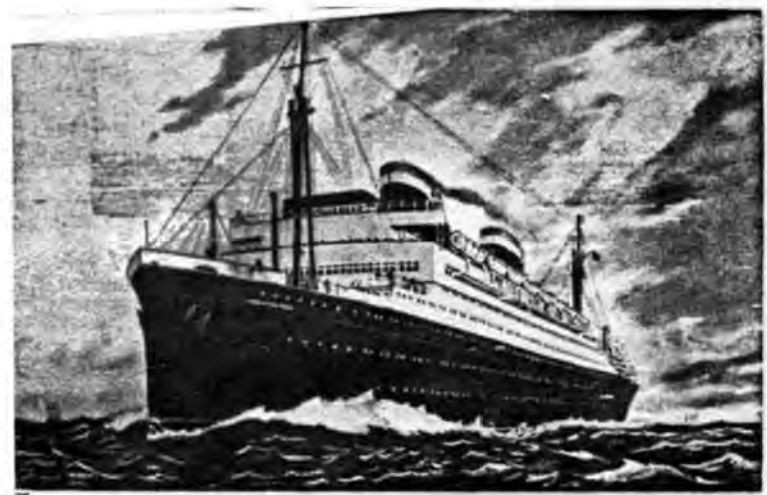
**PRESIDENT HARDING - KDWK - (1921-1940) 13,869 516x72**  
 Built 1921 as **LONE STAR STATE**, renamed **PRESIDENT TAFT** 1922, and then **PRESIDENT HARDING** August 1922. Sailed North Atlantic for U.S. Lines 1920's & 1930's; sold to Antwerp Navigation Co. in 1939 and renamed **VILLE DE BRUGES**. Bombed and sunk by Nazi aircraft May, 1940. Author was r/o on her in 1928.



**PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT - KDWS - (1922-1948) 13,869 516x72 19K.** Built as **PENINSULA STATE** 1922, renamed **PRESIDENT PIERCE** 1922, and then **PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT**, August 1922. Sailed North Atlantic and Bermuda cruises until 1941 when renamed **JOSEPH T. DICKMAN** and used as troopship in WW II. Scrapped in 1948.



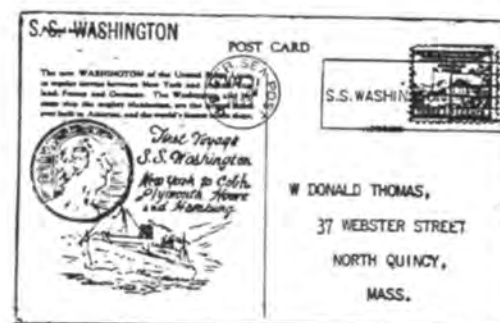
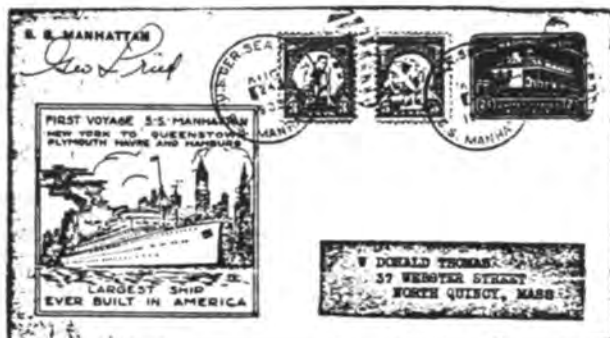
**MANHATTAN - WIEA - (1932-1964) 24,289 668x86 21K.** Built 1932, largest U.S. ship when built. On run to Europe, then cruises in U.S. waters until 1941, when renamed **WAKEFIELD** and used as troopship. Caught fire at sea, rebuilt, laid up, scrapped in 1964. Author was on maiden voyage and spent a year on her as 2nd r/o, leaving to join new SS **WASHINGTON**.



**WASHINGTON - WLEE - (1933-1965) 24,289 668x86 21K.** Sister to **MANHATTAN**, largest U.S. ship. Sailed on Europe run until 1940, then cruised in U.S. waters until 1941 when became troopship **MOUNT VERNON**. In 1948 resumed U.S. LINES service until 1951. Scrapped in 1965. Author was Chief r/o on her until leaving for shore work as radio union organizer.



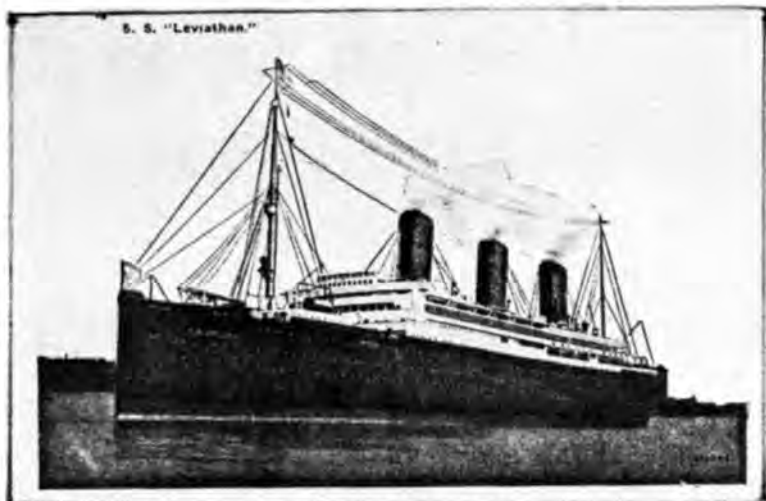
Brochures advertising **PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT** and **MANHATTAN** cruises to Bermuda; baggage stickers used on the **MANHATTAN** and **WASHINGTON**; and first voyage covers from **MANHATTAN** and **WASHINGTON**. Capt. George Fried, famous for sea rescues, was Master on both ships and was gracious about autographing first voyage covers for the two ships. It was a pleasure sailing with him. By coincidence both he and the author retired in Coral Gables, FL, and bought houses across the street from each other.



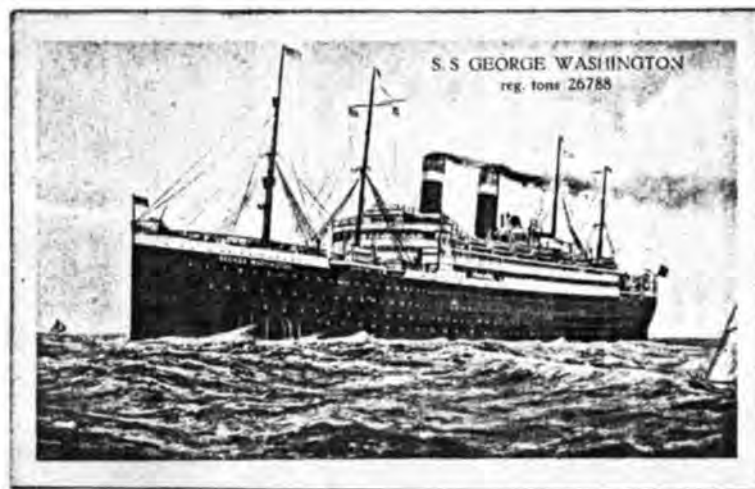


THE UNITED STATES LINES

By Don Thomas - 1340-SGP



**LEVIATHAN - WSN-WSBN (1914-1938) 59,957 907x100 24K.** Built 1914 as German liner **VATERLAND**. Interned at New York and seized in 1917. Known as the "Levi". Transported many thousands of troops in WW I. First voyage with U.S.LINES was July 4, 1923, after extensive refitting. Prohibition and the depression meant small passenger lists and large losses, so ship was laid up in 1934, and scrapped in 1938.

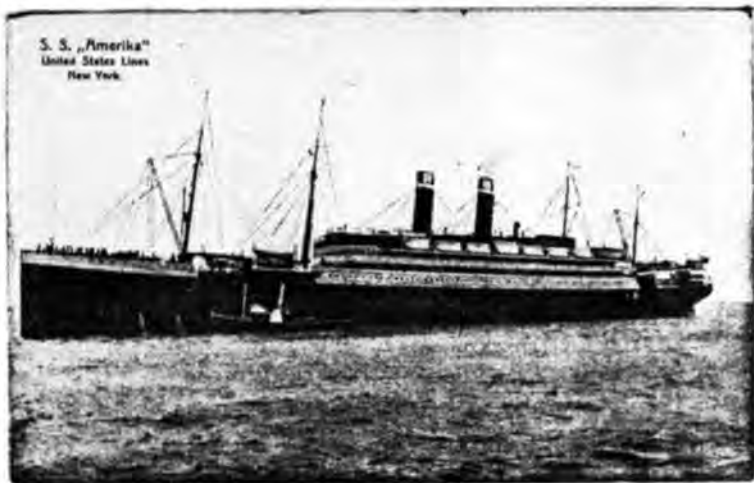


**GEORGE WASHINGTON - KDCL - (1908-1951) 23,788 699x78. 19K.** Built Germany for North German Lloyd. Interned at New York 1914, seized 1917. Used as troopship in WW I. Sailed 1920-21 for U.S. Mail Line, then to U.S.LINES in 1921. Sailed Transatlantic until 1932. Renamed **CATLIN** in 1941, but returned by British and renamed **GEORGE WASHINGTON**. Converted, one funnel removed, and used as troopship 1943-1947. Destroyed by fire & scrapped 1951.

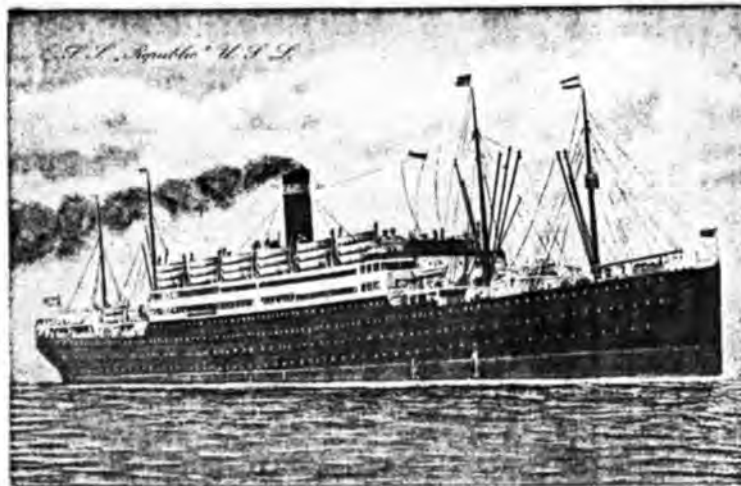


RADIO OFFICERS  
**FLAGSHIP LEVIATHAN, 1928**  
 GEORGE E. SINCLAIR, Chief  
 STANLEY W. YOUNG, Ass't Chief  
 KENNETH E. UPTON, Ass't  
 ARTHUR J. CHARTERS, Ass't  
 CHARLES E. MAASS, Ass't  
 GERARD C. BURTCHELL, Ass't

Christmas card, LEVIATHAN Radio Staff, 1928.



**AMERICA - KDOW - (1905-1957) 21,145 668x74 18K.** Built 1905 as **AMERIKA** for Hamburg-Amerika Line. Interned at Boston, 1914, seized 1917, converted to troopship, renamed **AMERICA**. Sailed with U.S.LINES on North Atlantic 1922-1932, when it was laid up. Reconditioned as troopship 1942, with single funnel and renamed **EDMUND B. ALEXANDER**. Scrapped 1957.

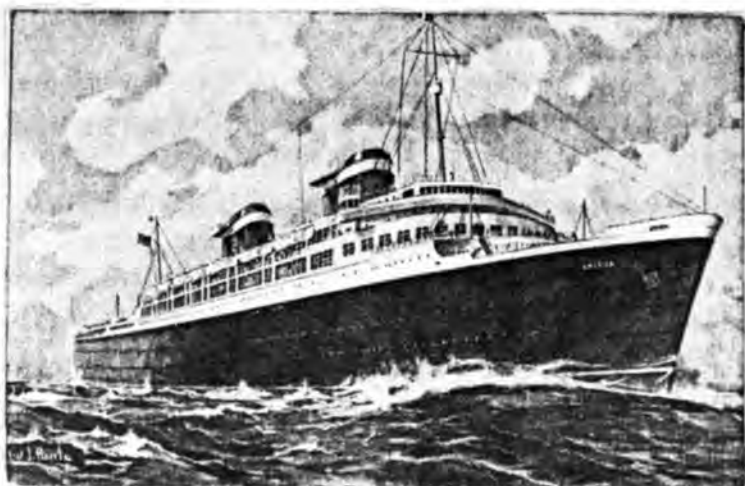


**REPUBLIC - KSN - (1907-1952) 17,910 599x68 14K.** Launched 1903 as **SERVIAN**, sold to HAPAG, renamed **PRESIDENT GRANT**, 1907. Interned at New York 1914, seized 1917 and used as transport thru WW I. Renamed **REPUBLIC** in 1924 and sailed with U.S.LINES in the 1920's and 1930's. Was a troopship and hospital ship in WW II. Scrapped in 1952.

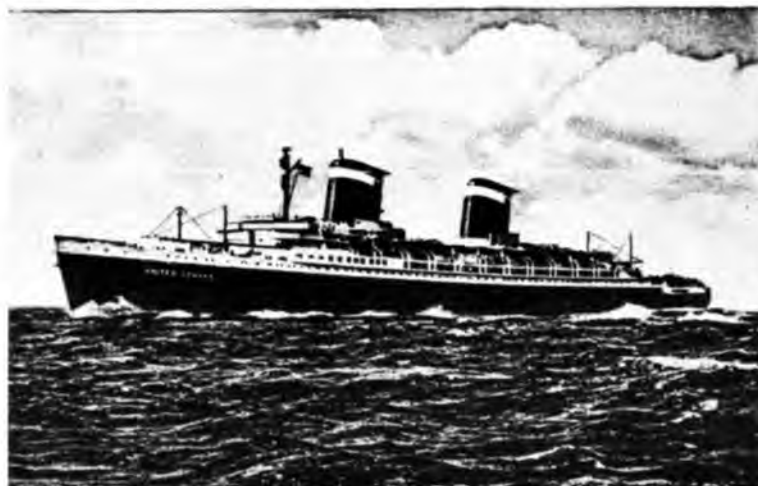




BY -DON THOMAS-1340-SGP



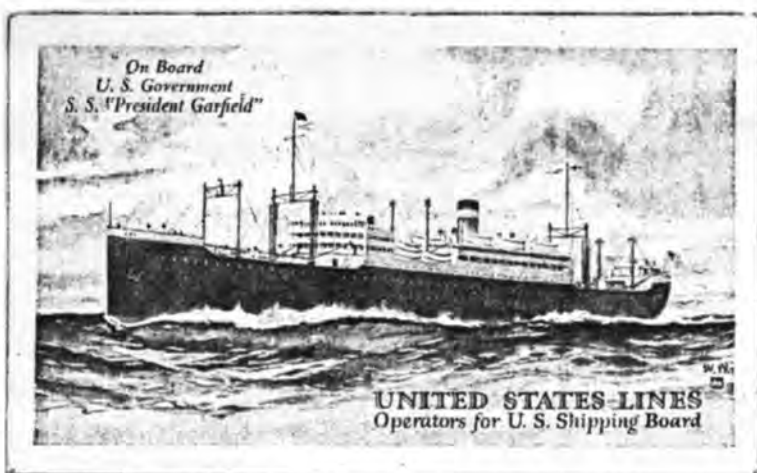
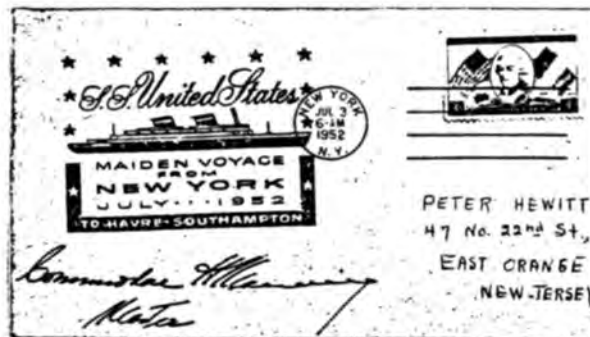
**AMERICA - WC7556 - (1940 - ----) 33, 352 660x93 23K.** Largest U.S. ship at that time. Cruises and North Atlantic run for U.S. LINES until 1941, when taken over by Navy and renamed **WEST POINT**. Troopship in WW II. 1946-1964 was on Europe run and West Indies cruises. Sold 1964 to Chandris Lines and renamed **AUSTRALIS**. Still sailing under Greek registry.



**UNITED STATES - KJEH - (1952 - ----) 53,329 916x101 30K.** Largest merchant ship ever built in U.S. Gained Blue Ribbon Transatlantic speed record from **QUEEN MARY**. Used on Atlantic run with occasional cruises. Laid up in 1969 on termination of government subsidy. Various plans for operating her again have been proposed, but she still is laid up in Norfolk.



First voyage souvenir cacheted covers from **AMERICA** and **UNITED STATES**.



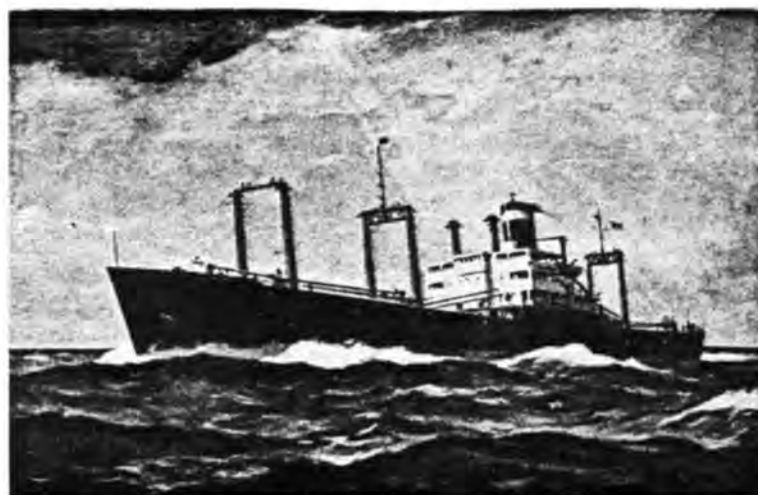
**PRESIDENT GARFIELD - KDTC - (1921-1948) 10,538 502x62 14K.** Launched as **BLUE HEN STATE**. Renamed **PRESIDENT GARFIELD** 1923. Used N.Y.-London service by U.S. LINES, along with sister ships **PRESIDENT ADAMS**, **MONROE**, **POLK** and **VAN BUREN** until all delivered to **DOLLAR LINE** in 1924. **DOLLAR** became **AMERICAN PRESIDENT LINES** in 1938. Ship renamed **PRESIDENT MADISON** 1939. Renamed **KENMORE** and used as transport in 1941; renamed **REFUGE** in 1942 and used as hospital ship. Scrapped 1948, as was **MONROE** and **VAN BUREN**, **ADAMS** and **POLK** lost in Pacific 1943-44.



**AMERICAN MERCHANT - WTP - (1920-1940) 7,430 438x58 15K.** On N.U.-London run with sister ships **AMERICAN BANKER**, **FARMER**, **IMPORTER**, **SHIPPER**, **TRADER** and **TRAVELER**. These large Hog Island types were operated by U.S. LINES for **AMERICAN MERCHANT LINES** until sold and put under Belgian registry in 1940. Renamed **VILLE DE NAMUR**, bombed and sunk same year, as were all others except **AMERICAN BANKER** (**VILLE D'ANVERS**). The **AMERICAN MERCHANTS LINE** was the first line struck by the ARTA in efforts for recognition of a radio officer's union.



**PIONEER MINX - KPEJ - 13,387 563x-- --K.** One of nine **Mariner** type, fast general cargo ships operated by U.S. LINES in worldwide service from East Coast ports. The fleet also includes a large number of C-2 freighters.



A C-2 type fast cargo vessel, one of 44 C-2 type freighters owned by U.S. LINES, sailing from East Coast USA ports to world wide destinations. U.S. LINES is now a highly successful operator of container express freighters.



# Radio pioneers celebrate proud tradition

By LARRY WADDELL  
Press Staff Writer

THE STACCATO dots and dashes of Morse code still crackle in the ears of the more than 50 veteran radio operators who gathered for the fall meeting of the Elmo N. Pickerill chapter of the Society of Wireless Pioneers yesterday.

Among the most senior of the former professional "brass pounders" was the society's founder, past president and current executive secretary, William A. Breniman of Santa Rosa, Calif.

Breniman, who organized the international society of wireless radio operators 16 years ago, was guest of honor and featured speaker at the chapter's luncheon meeting at the Colts Neck Inn, Colts Neck Township.

He also will be honored tomorrow night in New York City where he will receive the Radio Club of America's Ralph Batcher Award for his contributions to the wireless communications profession.

Breniman became interested in radio nearly 70 years ago and was a wireless operator during World War I.

He received his commercial operator's license after the war and went to sea, serving aboard more than 40 merchant ships during the early 1920s.

Moving ashore in 1925, Breniman was employed for more than three decades as a communications technical adviser to the federal Civil Aeronautics Administration before retiring in 1957.

Among the veteran operators attending yesterday was Earl W. Korf of Middletown Township, who has held an amateur radio license since 1919 and commercial licenses since 1924.

Korf went to sea at 18, shipping out of San Francisco as a combination cabin boy, deck boy and mess boy on the South Seas-bound barkentine Mary Winkelman in 1923.

"We were shipwrecked on my very first trip," he said, explaining that his ship was lost when it hit a reef off the Samoan islands.

"Fortunately, no lives were lost, and I was credited with saving the captain's wife when I grabbed her



Asbury Park Press

William A. Breniman, founder of the Society of Wireless Pioneers, wearing what he called "the badge of the professional" — his old marine radio officer's hat, speaks at a meeting of the society's Elmo N. Pickerill chapter yesterday in Colts Neck Township.

just as she was about to be swept overboard. When I got back to the United States," he continued, "I learned wireless and served seven or eight years as an operator aboard ships in the Pacific and in Alaskan waters."

In the latter, he was chief wireless operator for the Alaska Packers Association's Naknak cannery station.

In 1930, Korf became a radio operator with the airline now known as TWA and spent about 40 years as an operator and navigator with TWA and several other airlines.

Some of his most memorable

experiences came during World War II when TWA held military contracts for flights throughout the world and Korf often had VIPs aboard.

"On one flight from Karachi, India, to Washington, D.C., we carried Col. Jimmy Doolittle without really knowing just who he was and what he had done," Korf said.

"The day after we got back to the States," he continued, "I picked up the paper and read President Franklin D. Roosevelt's announcement that Doolittle had led an air strike two weeks earlier that resulted in the first bombing of Tokyo."

Among other notables Korf carried during his wartime service with TWA were Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Gen. Mark Clark and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Chinese leader.

He also remembered that he became a member of the "Four Engine Glider Club" when the plane on which he was a navigator lost power on all four engines and the aircraft dropped from 3,000 feet to 500 feet before the fuel flow was restored.

Older readers who recall tuning their radios to the good music stations in the '30s will find a familiar ring to John O. Seaver's amateur station call letters, W2XR.

Seaver, a veteran "brass pounder" from Point Pleasant Beach, said the letters originally were assigned to the experimental New York high-fidelity music station now identified as WQXR. He received the call letters when the broadcasting station took its present identification.

"I was interested in radio while I was still in high school up in Rhode Island," he said. "I got my amateur license in 1934, the same year I became a licensed telegrapher."

During the late 1930s, Seaver went to sea as an operator aboard Clyde Mallory coastal freighters and Cities Service Co. tankers. He joined Eastern Airlines during World War II and served as a ground operator at both Newark and LaGuardia airports before moving on to the line's stations in Houston and Atlanta.

"In an average eight-hour day as ground operators," he recalled, "we'd handle from 800 to 900 messages and work at transmitting speeds of 35 to 40 words per minute."

Like most veteran operators, Seaver could recognize many of his radio colleagues by their "fist."

He explained that "just about every operator has a distinctive way of sending a message with a Morse key. It's mostly his individual rhythm in transmitting."

Tom Kilpatrick of Boothwyn, Pa., director of the Elmo Pickerill chapter, has been licensed as both an amateur and commercial operator since 1942, a year after he completed radio school in Boston.

He served a short stint early in World War II as a ground operator for

Pan American Airways and, for four months, as an operator aboard a Liberty ship carrying bananas from the Caribbean to North Africa.

Kilpatrick joined the Sun Oil Co. in 1943 and made many trips in Allied convoys between the United States and Caribbean and England, sailing as an operator aboard tankers. He retired last year after 40 years' service with the company.

"I guess I was lucky in my years' experience at sea," he said, "because I never had to transmit a distress signal. And my ships were never hit by the enemy even though we had plenty of scares in the waters where the German submarines were operating."

Some of the things that annoyed him most as an operator were "jokers who sent out phony distress calls that tied up the radio channels set aside the world over for emergency messages."

The Elmo Pickerill chapter, which has members in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and New England, is named for an associate of radio pioneer Lee DeForest. Pickerill later was chief radio operator aboard the United States Line's Leviathan, the former German liner Vaterland that was the world's largest steamship during the 1920s.

In his informal address at yesterday's meeting, Breniman described Pickerill as "one of the earliest operators to make wireless contact between the ground and airplanes, as far as the records show."

The society founder said Pickerill got the idea that radio could be useful in air-to-ground communications soon after the Wright brothers' first successful flight in the early 1900s.

"When Elmo told the Wrights about his idea," Breniman continued, "the brothers took a dim view because they felt the radio equipment would be too heavy."

"Apparently their rejection did not deter Pickerill, he continued. He said the pioneering wireless operator learned to fly under the Wright brothers' tutelage and later took wireless equipment aloft from an airfield on Long Island.

Near the end of his presentation, Breniman asked permission to introduce a friend of 60 years standing and held aloft his old marine radio officer's hat.

"This is the badge of the professional," he said, "and I'm donating it to the society's historical archives."

Reprinted from Asbury Park Press - Thursday, Nov. 15 1984 - Focus - By Larry Waddell - Staff Writer



IN MEMORIAM

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform"

**FRANK GEISEL** This will chronicle the loss of a treasured friend who closed his key for the last time - July 12 1984. Frank had a close bond with the Society since he was included in the close circle of friends who founded the Society in 1968. Charter Member No. 5-P, he was our First Secretary and Second President. He spent the later years dedicated to SOWP recruiting many of our early members and doing yeoman duty as required. His passing came after a long illness. Frank's first job as R/O was on the SS Spokane/WGE in 1919. Since, he has served on 17 ships until 1926 when RCA tapped him for a shore job at "KPH" where he spent 17 active years at the key handling hundreds of thousands of message, countless "TR's", WX reports and "PX", also many hundred SOS calls. NavRadio San Diego/NPL requested him to rebroadcast a "CQ" to all ships at sea re: Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 1941. Frank retired in 1967 after spending 12 years as Manager of KPH. Ye Ed first met "FG" when he helped him lug his baggage aboard a new S.O. Tanker F.H.Hillman/KDVK in 1922. Frank was a loyal friend and dedicated to SOWP. His loss is shared with us all. He leaves his wife Mary, Son Frank Jr. (Col. in U.S.A. and two daughters. While our loss is deep, our profound sympathy goes to his wife and family members. - 30 -

## The RCofA-Batcher Award

### RECIPIENTS

- Morgan McMahon 1976 \*
- John Rider 1977
- Bruce Kelley 1978 \*
- Robert W. Merriam 1979 \*
- Ed Raser 1980 \*
- Ernst A. DeCoste 1981
- Louise Ramsey Moreau 1982 \*
- Joseph B. Pavak 1983 \*
- William A. Breniman 1984 \*

(\* ) Member or Tech. Asc.  
Society of Wireless Pioneers

1909



1984



Ralph R. Batcher

# The Radio Club of America 75th Diamond Jubilee YEAR BOOK

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR BOOK is essentially a History of the RCofA and its members. A limited press run of this unusual 'one-of-a-kind' book is sure to make it become a 'collector's item'. Many RCofA members have been responsible for the growth and development of radio, especially the early days of the art. There are nearly 300 pages and many hundreds of photographs with background items you will find noplacelse. The edition is truly a 'gold-mine' of information and history. A limited number of copies are available to Society members. Contact Fred Link, Pres. RCofA, Robin Hill Farms, Pittstown, NJ 08867 Information on the Jubilee Book and joining will be furnished.



# Radio Club of America - Award to SOWP

*Log - Ancient Mariner*

(Continued from Page 3)

The trip was smooth and quite delightful. We arrived in BWI Airport about dusk and were met by Jack Kelleher, Director of our Washington Chapter. He drove us to our hotel - The Howard Johnson Inn [across from Watergate] well located and reasonable in price.

On November 9th, we attended a meeting of Capital Area Chapter members as 'Guests of Honor'. The setting was in the Officer's Club at Fort Meyers, across the Potomac - a very beautiful room in most attractive surroundings. Here I was presented with a meaningful plaque by the Chapter, with John Kelleher doing the honors. Our transportation was furnished by John Swafford who kindly picked us up at our hotel and returned us after the meeting. We enjoyed meeting members of Chapter Ten, many of whom I had not previously met.

An unexpected 'bonus extra' was the opportunity of meeting "Ted" Phelps, Director of the Society's Inland Seas Chapter who drove over from Columbus Ohio to attend the meeting and get acquainted. I was also delighted in meeting some of my colleagues of 'Airway Days' in Washington including "Em" Mehrling who had been Chapter Director and shortly will be SOWP's VP in charge of P&R.

We also had a very enjoyable visit with an old friend - Ruth Barnabei whom we had not seen for many years. Her husband "Barney" and I had been closely associated in the CAA during the time I spent in DCA as Deputy Director of the Communications Division. During "Barney's" tenure as Chapter Director, prodigious gains were made, thanks to his enthusiasm and dedication. Unfortunately Col. Allen Barnabei became a Silent Key Jan. 29 1983. It was therefore an inspiration to hear Director Kelleher and past Director "Em" Mehrling tell of the intense interest Ruth has maintain in the Chapter, taking care of much of the yeoman work, et cetera.

On November 10th we attended a meeting of the Society of Airway Pioneers - another gala occasion. Here we were also the "Guests of Honor" at a 'reunion' of their Wing Chapter at Fall Church Inn. My longtime friend "Em" Mehrling [from CAA days in 'Foggy Bottoms'] was Wing Director. "Em" presented me with a beautiful Silver bowl richly engraved, for establishing their Society back in 1958. About an even hundred attended and among those were many who worked for or with me in the Communications Division. It was a "Day to Remember" in our logbook, with thanks going to "Em" for setting back scheduled date of their meeting several weeks to fit in with our plans and trip. During our stay in Washington we got in a bit of sightseeing and took in an evening at the Kennedy Center where Marlyn Horne gave a grand performance. Impression: I used to have no trouble driving the streets of Washington circa early 1950's. However streets and roads have changed so much that I was nearly bewildered. Even my old office across from the Reflection Pool where I looked out on Lincoln monument [T-3] was gone!

Leaving Washington Nov. 13th Jack Kelleher picked us up and we had a fine drive to Tinton Falls which is quite close to Colt's Neck Inn where Secretary Frank "Shelley" Shellenbarger, Secretary of Chapter XI had made advance reservations at the Hilton Hotel. While we did not expect so much hospitality we learned that one day of our stay was picked up by Shelley and the Chapter.

The meeting at Colt's Neck Inn on Nov. 14th brought out nearly a hundred members and their guests. Here again we were "Guest of Honor" and here again a treasured 'Certificate of Appreciation' was bestowed upon your founder. It is a wonderful feeling to be so honored by one's peers and it is hard to express in full our appreciation for their wonderful hospitality. The evening was spent with long-time friend Earl Korf and wife Suzanne - a fine dinner at their home. Of course Earl and I "covered the waterfront" during all too brief time.

Some of those attending the meeting had traveled long distances including Henry "Hank" Warner of Kennebunkport Maine. I also had the opportunity of visiting two members, antecedent in being honored with the Batcher Award. These being Ed Raser [SGP-35] one of our Charter members and Louise Ramsey Moreau [TA-25]. I tried to meet every member attending. One I was particularly eager to meet was "Dick" Egolf [Senior-SGP-71] another Charter Member who started in our business on the SS. Hamilton/KOA in 1912. Dick has furnished us many fine photographs of ships and radio 'shacks' which have been published over the years. I did enjoy a short visit Elmo Pickerill's Director "Tom" Kilpatrick who presented the Chapter Award. His picture along with several others will be seen on Page 39.

And now on the road again - this time to "THE BIG APPLE". "Shelley" had offered to drive us from the Hilton to New York Athletic Club but at the last moment he had an emergency call so he arranged for a limousine to furnish transportation to New York. We were almost overcome with his hospitality but considering the difficult problem on travel we accepted. We did enjoy the New Jersey countryside as our experienced driver skillfully guided his Cadillac through the maze of roads and bridges and deposited us at the door of the NYAC. Thanks Shelley!

Incidentally, Fred Link, Prexy of RCoFA and member NYAC had kindly made reservations for us to stay at the Club and since the presentation ceremonies and banquet were to be held in the Club, we felt quite comfortable not having to travel the streets of New York at night New Yorkers probably take night travel in stride but after reading the 'Noo Yawk' papers we felt comfortable in doing our nocturnal wanderings inside.



## PRESENTATION OF RALPH BATCHER MEMORIAL AWARD

Nov. 16 1984. Bruce L. Kelley [ Left ] Curator, Antique Wireless Association presenting award to Founder William A. Brenima, of the Society of Wireless Pioneers Inc.

Now - a word about our host, Fred M. Link, President of the Radio Club of America whom I would characterize as a "human dynamo". He has served as President of the Club for some 15 years - longer than any of the 31 who have held the same office before him.

Throughout the Communications industry, Mr. Link is known as "Father of Land Mobile Radio". As founder of Link Radio, Mr. Link is best known for putting "FM" radio technology in the hands of policemen in the U.S. and overseas for use in the Army Signal Corps during WW2. He began his career as an amateur radio enthusiast, then worked as Ass't. Chief Engineer for the DeForest Radio Company. In 1930 he founded Link Radio and by 1932 mobile radios made by Link's organization were being used by police departments in New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and San Francisco. His tenacity and grasp of details plus an affable personality have brought workwide acclaim. I should add that his 'smarts' on technology, especially "FM" did not hurt.

There were some three hundred members and guests attending the Awards Banquet the evening of Nov. 16 1984. While I had travelled 3000 miles to attend the meeting, there were members who flew in from Japan, Saudi Arabia and a number from Europe to attend.

I was fortunate in having my award presented by Bruce L. Kelley, currently Curator of the Antique Wireless Association's museum. I had met Bruce on his trip West, circa 1972 at the Foothill College Museum when they dedicated a room to Dr. Lee DeForest. Mr. Kelley has a tremendous voice, well modulated and delivery of his eulogy placed me on 'Cloud Ten' [ No space left on C-9.] Following the presentation I was grateful for the opportunity of giving a short talk about the Society and our effort to preserve the history of the radio-telegraph and communications (art) of the early days before it becomes lost to posterity in the mists of time.

During our brief stay in New York City, we toured Lincoln Center and took in the first day of the Rockettes Christmas show at Radio City. Never had we enjoyed them so much.

Included in our travel plans was Thanksgiving week to enjoy a visit with our son and wife in Elkhart, Indiana. The reason for taking rail rather than air was convenience - good over night schedule from Grand Central Station in New York to Chicago - besides, I had always been a "rail buff."

We did enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner with Son Warren and his wife. The first opportunity we have had in twenty plus years. A brief stopover in Chicago to change trains and a luncheon with a good friends . . . then on West! The trip through the Rockies over the old D&RG tracks (through Moffet Tunnel) was grand. The air was crystal clear and the mountains stood out in all their pristine glory. Good connections arriving Oakland with a few minutes wait for bus which delivered us to our doorstep.

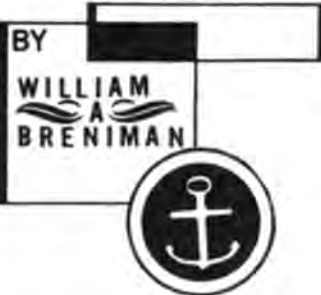
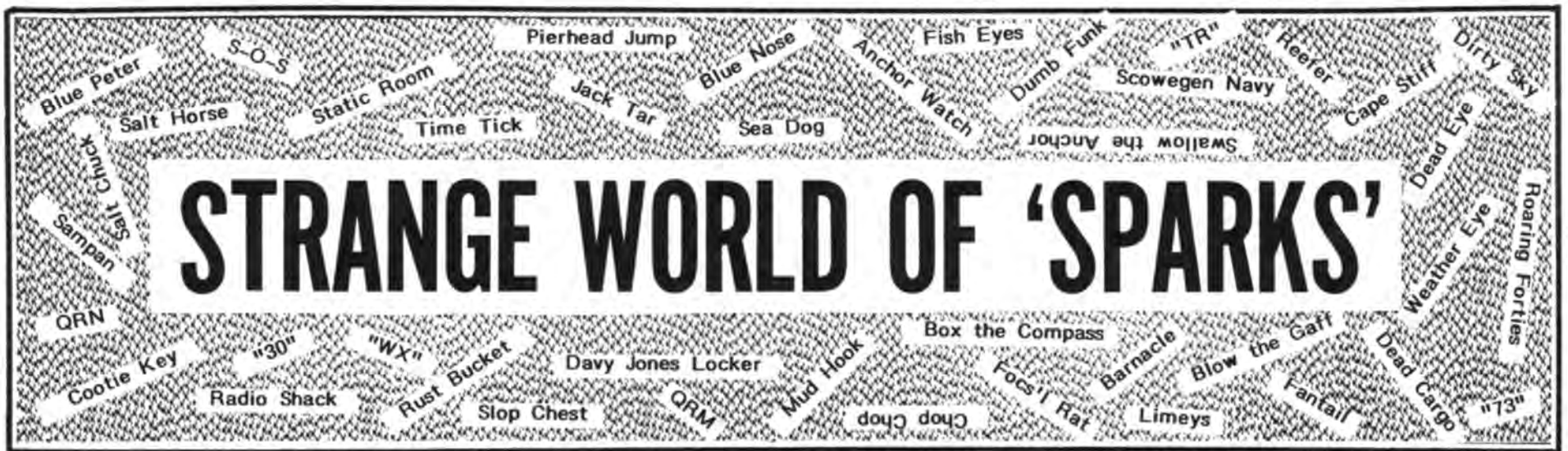
So many friends have inquired about the trip, I thought this letter would serve to record another episode of history which might not be all important but was wonderful. I could write an epilogue of things overlooked and people not mentioned but will ask your indulgence and pardon. I should mention in closing that I feel the Society as well as Ye Ancient Mariner benefited from the trip. Finally, as Founder, I can say that "we have one of the best organization" and quality of members I have ever observed - Ever!

William A. Breniman - Secretary



*ship's mail*





iority, he might 'pull' an assignment on a 'Greyhound' that sails the 'Western Ocean' to Europe.

Some Ops enjoy assignments on 'Hurrah-boats' which are excursion steamers. Others sail on a 'pick-pocket' which means a boat of small cargo capacity. A 'Banana-boat' which carries the golden fruit from the Carib to various ports, North and South, while others are content on a 'Tramp' and wouldn't sail anything else.

In sailing the 'Main', Sparks will probably cross 'The Line' which might be the equator in which event he will be initiated by King Neptune and party. Perhaps initiated isn't the word but he will be painfully aware that Davy Jones and all of the denizens of the deep carry out their appointed missions with dispatch and aplomb even if dignity fails to prevail. Of course the 'line' might be the 'Sunday-Monday Line' if you are sailing the 'drink' across the Pacific which means crossing the 180th parallel of longitude. Your route may take you through the 'Roaring Forties' where you can expect some 'heavy weather' (generally between 40 and 50 degrees North or South Latitudes. The Gulf is generally the Gulf of Mexico, The 'Medi' refers to the Mediterranean, Salt Chuck is Puget Sound, The Potato Patch is a stretch of water at the tip of Coney Island where the currents of Gravesend and the ocean mingle and cause bad eddies; Cape Stiff refers to Cape Horn; Cross Roads of the World - Panama Canal; Down under refer to the antipodes--especially Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. Hululand Hawaii, Limeyland is England, Newfie, Newfoundland. Sable Island is known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic and your port of destination is sometimes known as 'Hole in the Beach'. Carib of course refers to a voyage into the Caribbean.

Of course blue-water sailors include all nationalities. The 'herring-snapper' is usually a Nova Scotia or Newfoundland seaman and a Down-Easter hails from Maine. The true Blue Nose is a Nova Scotia seaman while a Lascar is an East Indian. The Frogs come from France and the Krauts from Germany. The Yankees and the Limeys usually fight the Revolutionary war all over again when they meet in a bar shoreside. Decision always indecisive. A 'Swensker' is a Swedish seaman while a Scandihoovian, Scowegian or Scandiwegian refers to a Scandinavian.

Continued on Page 11

*The Socker*

The world of the Radio Operator is a unique one. Not only does he have the opportunity of visiting 'far away places with strange sounding names' but he has to learn to live with a terminology and nautical slang that is strange and different.

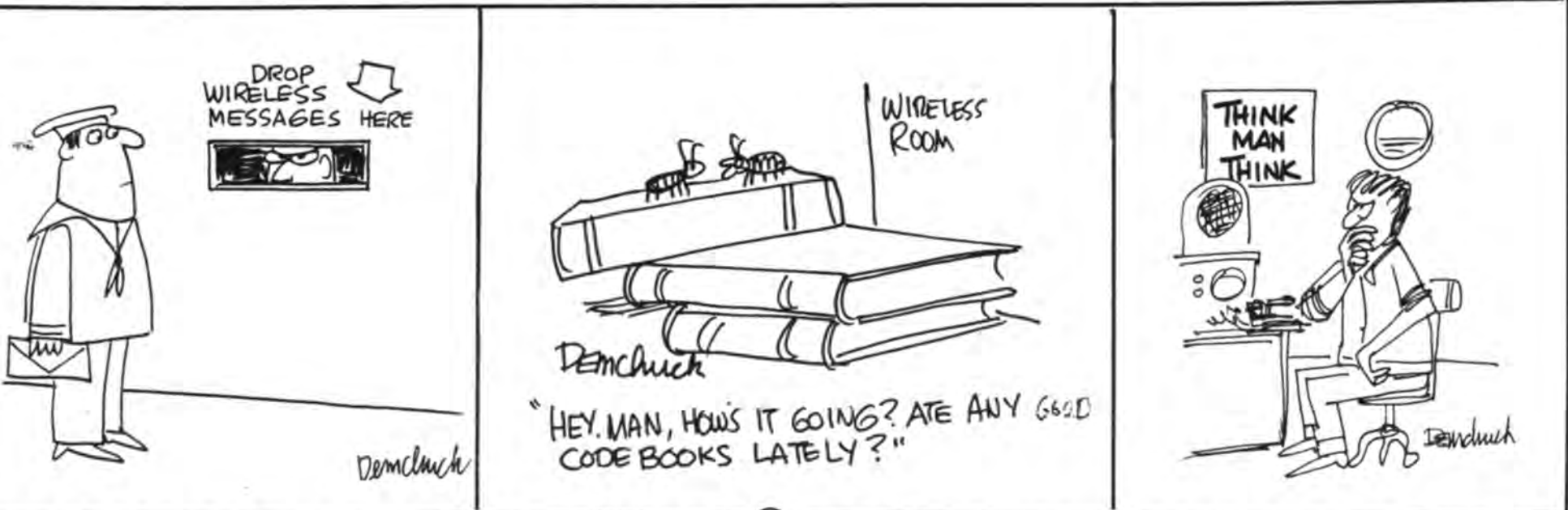
For example: While officially he may be signed on as the ship's Radio Officer, he suddenly becomes "SPARKS" to all of the crew members. When he uses a typewriter, it suddenly becomes a "mill". In sending messages he 'tickles' his 'bug' unless he has a 'glass-arm'. The rotary gap suddenly becomes a 'rock crusher' and when he receives messages his detector is usually a 'cats whisker' to find the most sensitive spot on his hunk of 'rock' (galena).

Sometimes he has to jar the Chief Engineer's compass to have the 'juice' turned on. When all goes well, the sigs slide off his 'sky hook' without trouble unless QRM or QRN give him a bad time.

Sometimes people ashore call him a 'Jack Tar' or an 'Old Salt' unless he is out of work when they call him a 'beachcomber.' Of course when assigned he takes his 'ticket' aboard the 'rust-bucket' and puts it up in the shack where he stands his 'trick'. Some even sport 'pink' tickets--they are the elite!

While the ship is working cargo he has to watch out for the 'winch hog' or 'winchie' who drives the winches that control the slings. He also has to watch out for the 'reindeer' who are the fast handed-truckmen shuttling cargo. Guard against the 'pile-drivers' who are the careless winchmen who set their load down hard or the 'appleknockers' who may be a green hand at the winch.

Once aboard he becomes acquainted with 'Bucko' the mate, Dicky, the Second Officer and 'The Old Man' who might still be in his late twenties or early thirties. The Old Man is the "Skipper" of the 'Oil-can' if she is a tanker, a 'Reefer' if she carries refrigerated cargo a 'pig-boat', if she is a submarine. a cattle-boat or if Sparks has enough sen-





## Telling it the Way it Was

A ship usually has its roster of 'characters'. The 'Forecastle rat' is a spy for the officers or owners; JONAH is usually a sailor who brings bad luck to the ship. The Sea-dog or Sea Stiff is usually found on the 'tramp' steamers. The sea-lawyer is usually an egotistical and talkative sailor; a sea-pig likes his chow. Deckaroo is the term sometimes used for the deck hands while the 'Black Gang' work below in the engine room. Five or Sixer usually loans money to fellow ship-mates. You take five and pay back six (dollars, pounds, pesetas, guilders, etc.). A number taker may jump ship while a number eleven will complete the round trip. A rain squad is a sea-sick sailor, while a 'peanut' is a comic cup-up. Tom Pepper is one who tells 'tall' stories. A shell-back, Barnacle or old salt are all 'old timers' while a 'seagull' or 'snow-ball eater' are all retired seamen.

Endearing names reserved for the inexperienced seamen are often called any of the following pet names: Cherrypickers, plow coxwains, fresh-water sailors, landlubbers, fair weather sailors, hooshiers, landlubbers, soogee sailors, swabs, etc.

Since weather and state of the sea is of prime interest to SPARKS who has to collect such info, the peculiar terminology has a meaning all of its own. Dirty Sky is a cloudy, stormy sky; Muzzler or nose-ender is a head wind while a dead-muzzler is a hard head-wind. A soldier's wind is generally a beam or favorable wind. Q is a squall or squally weather while a 'stiff' un is a gale. A living gale is a furious gale. A Nor'wester as the name implies is a Northwest Gale while you would call it a Chocolate Gale if sailing the West Indies.

Dutchman's breeches is a patch of blue sky while a Dutchman's Cape (or Cape Flyaway) is a cloud on the horizon mistaken for land. Cat's tails, cocktails, colt's tail, mare's tale, etc., are types of cirrus clouds having the appearance of a cat's tail. Sea-grass is a mass of small hairlike cirrus clouds pre-saging a storm. A 'pea-souper' is a very heavy fog while the cock's eye is a sudden gleam of sunshine in a dark sky. The Devil's smile is spots of sunshine during stormy weather.

When watching the ocean you may see the 'Merry Men of May' which are currents caused by ebbing tides; Popple - an irregular sea, Dirty water and a pecky sea means a rough choppy sea while if you are sailing the far north you may observe 'ice pan' which is caked ice on the sea or 'land trash' cakes of ice near the shore.

Perhaps man does not live on bread alone - but it sure helps. Fond memories of chow aboard the old hooker? We still recall the Dandy Funk which is a pudding of hardtack and molasses; The 'fish eyes' or tapioca pudding; Sea Pie which is resurrection bolly or pie with fish, sand or sea dust. Resurrection pie by the way is leftovers of meat and vegetables cooked in decks between layers of dough. Punk of course is bread while Irish horse is tough corned beef. Canned monkey is embalmed beef while Monkey-meat is canned beef. Salt horse is salt beef, and Salt Junk is tough salt beef. Chicken is often referred to as 'Sea Gull Stew' while those who like fish will enjoy Cape Cod turkey which is salted codfish; Salmon is sea beef or pork while a can of Sharks is a can of sardines. We wash this down or 'mug up' with Moke although some 'go round the buoy' which means to have a second helping. All seamen are a hungry lot. Later we may have a little Cape Horn rainwater (rum) or a 'Second mate's nip which is spiked with full measure of liquor. Many sailors SPLICE THE MAIN BRACE (mostly for fatigue) after a hard night fighting QRM/QRM or weak sigs. (This usually in cold or cool (?) weather.) When we land a new assignment, we have been known to 'wet our stripes' in celebration, thereof.

Of course one who can not control his intake or is slightly inhibited might be described as being 'awash' or primed to the 'plimsoll mark'. He might also be well-spliced or moored in sots bay. Some might be charged with being a sheet in the wind or even four sheets in the wind, watertight with full cargo aboard, under too much sail, etc., etc.

Some of the daily routine we get used to is the Mate (and or others) shooting Charley Noble every day at noon. Not with a gun, with a sextant (to fix the ship's position). We get a 'time-tick' from NSS, etc. Occasionally, we join the Suicide Club when we have a dangerous job such as antenna work, etc. We watch the mate 'Jog the horse' or ride 'em down the maintack which means to work or drive the crew hard.

Finally the day comes when we 'Swallow the Anchor' This means that we quit the sea. Some day we 'hit the beach' or have 'channel fever'. We know that we have not shammed Abrahams or worked a Tom Cox's traverse.

At peace with the world, we can ride at anchor and catch some well earned garden steerage after a long tour of duty. We will guard against buying a white horse (squandering our money) and will catch the tide (seize the opportunity) of putting down the hook as we fly the red flag at the mast-head (to be in earnest) while carving out a spot in the Fiddlers Green (a seaman's place in after-life). So in conclusion, I will give one and all a 'Shake of my starboard fore lift' (shake hands) as I say '30' and sail into the Sunset.

--Bill Breniman



\* LISSEN, I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU....  
IT NEEDS A LITTLE WORK.



O mystic fascination,  
O fate idealized,  
I'm but a mass of molecules,  
Reversely polarized.  
I'm vanquished by a sorcery  
No amulet can cure,  
For, Love, you are the magnet,  
And I the armature.

The more I circle round you,  
Love's current stronger grows,  
Till leaping forth from heart to heart,  
Love's arc electric glows.  
Against the ardor of that flame  
Insurance won't insure,  
For, Love, you are the magnet,  
And I the armature.

The messages unnumbered,  
Of fond endearment fly,  
At once, in all directions,  
The wireless they out-vie.  
A throbbing heart is at the key,  
Its dots and dashes sure,  
For, Love, you are the magnet,  
And I the armature.

I dwell within your field of force,  
In that blest region where  
Your strength is to the distance,  
Inversely as the square,  
No influence external,  
Can me from you allure,  
For, Love, you are the magnet,  
And I the armature.

At last we'll cling together,  
Apart no more to roam,  
With hearts attuned harmonic,  
We'll sing of Ohm, sweet Ohm.  
One circuit never broken,  
While life and love endure,  
Forever you the magnet,  
And I the armature.

—PARK BENJAMIN.





**EDITOR'S NOTE**

Member Don de Neuf furnished us with the letter appearing on this page from Chief Radio Officer 'Per' A. Mikalsen of the Cruise Motor Ship, M/V "Royal Viking Sea" as he thought it would be of considerable interest on 'modern-day' ship traffic. The letter was dated May 5th 1984 and mailed from Piraeus, Greece. Quality of photographs may not be good as they were from copies of originals.  
W.A.B.

Since these 2 pictures were taken last year, the volume of traffic has increased a lot and it is a "rat-race" for the officer on duty in the radio room.

We are totally 3 radio officers here, one for each watch, myself included. The traffic is so heavy, that we have to work a lot of overtime, and 2 men are needed on watch quite often, in order to cope with the traffic, handling it as fast and efficient as I like to see it take place.

It is therefore, "heaven" for me to relax in my cabin, with only one amateur rig and only one circuit going.

When at duty, we have most often several circuits going simultaneously, while the ship's telephones are ringing around us. We have 3 telephone lines inwards from the vessel's automatic telephone exchange. As you may know, we have besides the radio equipment, also a satellite communication terminal. This vessel was the very first cruise liner to have such a system put in, back in 1976.

However, it is too expensive to use for telephone calls, as the charges are approximately US \$10.00 per minute for telephones to USA via an American satellite earth station. From here in the "Med" we work most of the telephone traffic via Rogaland radio/LGB Norway, they have an excellent quality and cover just about around the clock all waters in these waters extremely well. The charges run US \$4.20 per minute, or reduced between 10 pm till 10 am and all Sunday at a rate of US \$3.75 per minute. There are besides, several other radio stations we can use for telephone calls, but they are not as fast and good and reasonable as LGB.

Too bad that Norway does not allow 3rd party traffic, as I often would like to have a patch to my many American friends, without being able to take advantage of this when working hams at their QTH's.

Anyway, Don, I do hope to catch you again. I work approx. 99% CW, but do QSY to SSB on request, but I understand you are indeed a CW man yourself.

Thanks ever so much for sending me this interesting old-time info. I hope to be able to hook up with you again from my home QTH of Alta, Norway (Approx 70N 23E) from mid-July till mid-August this year. Up there I have a 3 band 5 ele yagi (TH5DX) on top of a HY-Gain 52 SS free-standing crank-up tower. We do have very little wind in the area, so I expect everything to be standing as I left it, when I return up there.

I believe I will be back sailing here again in mid-September, and will try to be working the ham bands also then, depending flag and rules and regulations.

Best 73 de LA3FL/MM  
S/PER (Per A. Mikalsen)

Note about commercial equipment:  
2 Main TX, 2 Res. TX (by EB Norway)  
7 Main RX (various brands), 3 VHF  
Telephones, Magnavox sat. comm.,  
2 telex machines.  
One new automatic telex  
transceiver ordered, incl.  
keyboard, printer, Video display, word processing, etc.

**ROYAL VIKING SEA**

ROYAL VIKING LINE  
P.O.Box 1612 Viks Oslo 1 Norway

Piraeus, Greece, May 5 1984

Donald K. deNeuf  
602-B-HV  
Southbury, Ct. 06488

From: Chief R/O Per A. Mikalsen  
M/S "Royal Viking Sea"  
P.O.Box 1612 Viks, 0119 Oslo  
Norway

Dear Don WA1SPM:

Thank you very much for the beautiful QSL card you have, and those very interesting and informative copies of enclosed materials. I enjoyed very much reading about yourself, see the picture of yourself, plus info. about various communication tapes, etc. I therefore want to write you back, so you can see that I am still aboard this vessel.

Quite recently we learned that the Norwegian owners sold out the whole company to American interests. However, we understand that the new owners, where mentioned J.H. Whitney and other investors, also the Rockefeller name has been briefly mentioned, are some of the "money-men" behind the purchase. They say that they intend to continue operating the vessels the same way as before, and with mostly the same people. We do not yet know what flag we are to sail under, but I understand they are negotiating with Norwegian authorities, if they can continue to sail them under Norwegian flag. There are some details still to be ironed out, so at this time, we still do not fully know what future holds regarding flag of registry. If it is changed, I will have to stop using my LA3FL/MM call, and perhaps get another one, if I am continuing here. Well, you will to have keep listening for me on the air. I am almost daily at sea QRV in the lower 30kHz of 28, 21,14 and 7 MHz, conditions permitting, and of course workload in the commercial shack permitting.

It is extremely busy in the commercial shack, mostly telex and telephones, but the CW is still in use. We monitor a lot of CW transmissions, mostly "traffic-lists", but occasionally also handle telegrams by CW when "Coastal radio stations" ashore have no sitor radio telex facilities.

I am enclosing a photo copy of a picture of myself, and also a copy of a picture showing the traffic we handled in a single month. All those telephone calls where nobody answered, are of course not pictured, hi. . . . .



'Per' A Mikalsen,  
Chief Radio Officer  
M/S ROYAL VIKING  
STAR - "LECK"



This pictures shows the volume of traffic handled in one single month aboard the liner M/S "Royal Viking Sea. Traffic has increased since, Molalsen informs.





# sea chanteys - pioneer's poems & such

"Lifted" from Wireless Age, World Wide Wireless and Those of Early Days

THE WIRELESS AGE

NOVEMBER, 1915



*The Ballad of the COTTON TRAMP*  
by Katherine Drayton Mayrant Simons Jr

At noon she cleared from the Cooper quay, when the stevedores were through.  
The wanton wastrel lipped the piles, and the floodtide frothed in blue.

The freight she bore beneath her hatch, like many of her ilk,  
Was the long, sea-island cotton strand that the women wear for silk.

Her lean-faced Mate and Skipper swore, finding no word too hard  
To curse the rules of meddling fools at the harbor Navy Yard.

"'Tis money sunk in useless junk and a bit of a nuisance as well,"  
Thus they spoke of the Marconi set installed on the Southern Belle.

Above swayed the antennæ, and the crippled lad below  
Was listening in for noonday calls, his wizened face aglow.

She made the cape in the dun of dawn, where the hog-backed rollers run,  
And raised the lights of Diamond Shoals, gone pale against the sun.

The August sea was sultry-still, the sky remained jewel-blue,  
But the underswell swung sullenly beneath the sobbing screw.

The glass, at noon, fell suddenly. Her Skipper gnawed his lip  
As the gusty wind veered round behind and struck the plunging ship.

He read the brief marconigram, and cursed its terse advice:  
"Gale off the Indies—put to port—" and he tore the message twice!

"By the living God, I'm master here! I dock the Southern Belle  
On Monday morn in Boston slip, or else in the slips o' hell!"

WIRELESS AGE - NOVEMBER 1915

## A Song of Wireless

Tah-daah-dah-dah, the king am I, the monarch of today;  
O'er earth and air and sea and sky, I hold unquestioned sway  
My Mercury-shaming couriers spring up from every clime,  
Turn night to day, and laugh away the threats of Father Time.  
From Eiffel's lofty reaches,  
To Poldhu's lonely beaches,  
From Sayville down to Arlington, across to Frisco town,  
Honolulu, Yokohama  
From proud old Fujiyama  
To Hong Kong and Vienna, men do homage to my crown.



Tah-daah-dah-dah, the superposed gray bulldogs of the sea;  
Loose triple-gun damnation at a word of code from me.  
My crackling spark gaps guide aloft the swooping aeroplane,  
And far below, with decks awash, the deadly submarine,  
They solve the ether's mystery  
They write the page of history.  
And when, a thousand miles at sea, comes sudden grim distress,  
Trim liners melt their funnels,  
Lazy trampers drown their gunnels,  
As they speed "Four bells," in answer to my ringing S. O. S.



Tah-daah-dah-dah, I tell the world of sorrow and of mirth,  
With Wall Street stock quotations flanked by news of death and birth,  
My messages are broadcast—seek not a chosen few,  
But fall alike upon the ears of Christian, Pagan, Jew.  
I span the racing oceans,  
Safe from their wild emotions,  
And I flout the booming breaker as he rages far below;  
I join the hands of nations,  
In firm, newborn relations;  
I unify the universe; I'm king—King Radio.

WIRELESS AGE - March 1917

—V. C. Jewel in Leslie's.

## RADIO RAVINGS

Conducted by D. Phocrieff Inslater

### That Station

Of all the stations I have worked,  
This station is the best.  
A "haunt" for all the lazy boys—  
And those who need a rest.

Hard at work at six o'clock,  
Off come coats and vests,  
You carry in a pile of wood  
To smoke away the pests.

These pests are mainly different bugs,  
(The skeeters are the worst),  
And on the war-path all the time  
For naught but blood they thirst.

With head 'phones on at seven bells,  
You shoot some N-I-Ls.  
The spiders get so thick just then  
You pray for shrapnel shells.

At eight o'clock the 'alarm is set,  
To wake you up for lunch;  
You dim the glim and pull the shades—  
And roll up in a bunch.

At one o'clock you Q-R-U,  
And set your clock for four;  
To get that M-S-G report,  
The P & O waits for.

At four o'clock your work is done,  
You've got that M-S-G;  
So nap till six, then doctor up  
The log, artistic-ly.

A (Modest) Reader.

THE WIRELESS AGE

NOVEMBER, 1915

## The New Wireless Telephone

An Artist's Idea of How Its Operations May Be Popularized





## Letters



### ...from SOWP Members

#### The Clinometer



BY- IVYN I. FARWELL

On May 9, 1917 I was assigned as second wireless operator to the Matson Navigation Co's liner SS Manoa. This would be my first trip to the Hawaiian Islands.

The United States had declared war against Germany in April, 1917. The Manoa was a fine ship - a freighter with passenger accommodations for fifty. I was pleased with the assignment, although I had recently done a trip on the most luxurious liner on the Pacific Coast, the SS Northern Pacific. Wireless jobs with Matson Ships were highly regarded. The Manoa had a fine wireless, a 500 cycle quenched gap set, as good as any on the Pacific coast, and the ship was noted for Matson Cuisine. This voyage turned out to be a noteworthy one.

The Manoa made Honolulu in about six days. Nothing unusual, to mention. We had, however, to publish the "Ocean News" for the passengers, which required considerable typing and mimeographing.

On arrival in Honolulu we found the harbor crowded with ships of all sizes, many of them foreign, that had been interned since the beginning of the war to escape possible capture by the British Navy. Among them was the largest, the German freighter, SS Pommern. It is about this ship that we are now concerned.

The Pommern had been interned with the crew aboard, waiting for a German victory and their freedom. But it was not meant to be that way. The U.S. entered the war and surprised them, removing the crew and confiscating the ship in the name of the U.S. Shipping Board. It was done quickly, but not before considerable damage was done to the vessel by the crew.

The Pommern was tied up to a dock near the Manoa. At the first opportunity the "sparks" (wireless ops) wandered over to see what the Germans had done to such a fine ship.

Our tour of inspection started at the bridge. There we found bits of flags that had been torn up. Someone said that an American flag had been treated in that manner. The wireless cabin was behind the bridge. There we saw evidence of quick destruction of the equipment. The transmitter and receiver had been thrown overboard. Auxiliary equipment had also been destroyed.

From the bridge we next went to the crews cabins on deck. There was evidence of fast departure everywhere. In one cabin I found what was to be a clinometer, or list indicator. Some crew member with

time on his hands had been painstakingly making such an instrument by filing it out of a piece of 1/8" brass sheet. The pointer had been completed in the form of an anchor. It was a beautiful job of cutting and filing. This I appropriated for a souvenir. The scale, showing the degrees of list, was incomplete, and, although I kept it, it had been lost through the years. The size and shape of the pointer is shown here in this exact tracing. It is beautiful hand work.

The next stop was below decks to the engine and boiler rooms. This was where the real damage had taken place. The boilers had been dry-fired and melted down. This alone made the Pommern a "dead" ship, with out source of steam and electrical power. There was other damage in the engine room, but it was insignificant. We saw no evidence of any effort to scuttle the ship.

Without power the Pommern was destined to be towed to San Francisco for repair. The Manoa was selected to do the towing job. A possible reason for this was the fact that it had a towing winch on the stern, with the necessary cable.

## Some - 'Stranger than Fiction!'

### Experiences-Adventures



German Steam Ship "Pommern" 1917

After ten days of loading sugar in Kahului, Maui, and Honolulu, the Manoa picked up the dead ship with the help of a Navy tug.

A "prize" crew of three or four was placed aboard the Pommern by our captain. For communication, the expertise of the "sparks" ingenuity came forth. The freight clerk of the Manoa, a former wireless operator who knew the code, was placed on the tow with a makeshift "wireless". It consisted of a doorbell buzzer, several dry cell batteries, the spare headset from the Manoa's wireless spares, and a makeshift key. A single wire strung between the masts of the Pommern, served as an aerial. It was remarkable how this tiny buzzer "transmitter" worked. For eleven days our captain would keep in touch with his crew on the dark ship, where they had only lanterns and subsistence supplies of canned food made edible with makeshift cooking facilities.

The Manoa was ready to start the 2100 mile trek to San Francisco the latter part of May, without passengers. This was a blessing for the wireless ops, as they didn't have to publish the "Ocean News" for the return trip. The communication worked well, and we shoved off with our baby at the end of a quarter mile tether.

The return trip to S.F. was uneventful, and the weather was favorable. On June 5, 1917 we arrived unscathed. The Pommern was unleashed and taken to the Bethlehem shipyard. It was repaired quickly and sent to duty in the Atlantic against its former owners - Germany, renamed; the name unknown to me.

This voyage concluded my "tour" as a commercial wireless (radio) operator, which had taken two years - 1915 to 1917 on six different vessels from lumber schooner to elite liner. I then chose my next career as an aviator by enlisting in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps in November, 1917.

by - Ivyn I. Farwell - 427-SGP

#### THE SWINGERS

To you, my friend, with the musical swing  
Your CW fist is surely a thing  
Of talant and beauty, a pleasure to hear.  
Your CW style really pleases my ear.

The younger gang, the Ops of today  
Want everything perfect, just like the way  
They hear it on tape, a mechanical thing.  
They just can't copy a brass pounders swing.

Goodman and Shaw, Dorsey and Bing  
Flooded the airwaves with musical swing  
As did the Ops of the CW trade  
From swinging fists, history was made

So keep it up swingers, side-swiper or bug.  
There's still some around whose heart strings you'll tug  
With your musical fist, and you can bet  
You'll brighten the ears of the old "swinging set".

Ken Johnson 2308-P 1984



## The World's Fastest Operator

BY- DAVE HIGGINBOTHAM

I TAKE exception to the article in the April Sparks Journal which says that Ted MacElroy must have been an amateur. NOT SO, HE WAS A COMMERCIAL OPERATOR. The extra-fast operators the article mentions as copying 100 wpm are none that I know in radio ever heard of and none of us ever knew of such an achievement. I very much doubt it can be done altho I will not say it's impossible as I have been fooled before. But I'd have to see it to believe it.

Here is the MacElroy story:

Ted came to WSO, RCA Chatham radio sometime in late 1920 or early 1921 direct from the Western Union, sat right down on a trans-Atlantic radio circuit and copied Continental code.

After some months he transferred or was transferred to Radio Central New York City.

He was not there long (got in a fight with the bosses, I heard) turning up in Chicago winning a speed contest at 77 wpm. This, to me, is the world's record.

Next we heard that he had a radio school in Boston. This enterprise folded.

Circa 1932-33 someone yelled up from the foot of my outside stairs in Bar Harbor, Maine. It was Mac!

"What you doin' in Bar Harbor?" I asked.

"Sellin' stoves."

I heard sometime later that he had started in business, manufacturing "bugs".

My next encounter with him was when I was at NAD, Navy Radio Boston in 1941 or 42. I decided to look him up and found the factory, a loft. He was happy to see me. Showed me around the place. Had one refrigerator cooling his glasses, another for the drinks. In one corner a pile of cases of liquor. (He was quite a boozier). "See Those aluminum rods stacked up against the ceiling?" he asked. "I was just getting along, making enough to buy a bottle when I wanted to, until last year. Had an order for practice sets from the army. They were lousy; I figured I'd never get another so I put a high price on 'em. But they repeated and repeated and at year's end I wound up with a lot of cash. Figured that aluminum was going to be in short supply so bought all those rods. Good deal." That was the last time I saw him.

During WWII when visiting Fred Tuthill, a brother RC operator, at that time Assistant Communication Officer for the 8th Fleet, in Algiers he said, "After the war you and I and Ted should get together in a company making equipment. You could be the sales manager, etc."

I heard some years later that Ted never returned to the States, had divorced his wife, returned to England, his homeland, and married a British heiress.

So that was the end of the scheme and this is the end of my story, except to say that Mac is no longer with us having become a silent key some years ago.

NOTE:

I know what speed radio operating is;--as a top operator with RCA in New York (Radio Central) won best all-around operator award (late 1920's) in a competition including receiving radio, receiving telegraph, copying radio tape and perforating transmitting tape. I thought I was pretty good until, about the same time, in a speed contest at the old Pennsylvania Hotel with Joe Chaplin I quit at 52 wpm, sat there and watched Joe copy 65 wpm for 15 minutes. It was then that I decided that there were others better'n I.

I have seen Joe, with the phones on one ear, using a homemade touch system, copy ten-letter code and talk Brooklyn Dodgers baseball with a guy sitting alongside of him. He left RCA to go with Press Wireless.

S/ Dave Higginbotham - 4095-SGP  
Highbrook Road  
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

Editor's Note:

Member Higginbotham, at 85 years of age reports he lost the sight of one eye a couple years ago - still does not use glasses. Other eye must be pretty good but has hard time reading the fine print.

## Realm of the Sea

Beyond the brine of the bridge's mist,  
Far from the fog-bound fettered side,  
Is the sailor's strand where the salt has kissed  
The wind and the weather, the waves and the tide.

by Viola Jacobson Berg

## Use with Salt

EDITOR - SPARKS JOURNAL

This is in reply to the letter in the April 1984 issue of Sparks Journal from M. R. Peters - 3847-P, wherein he challenges Ted McElroy's claim to be the world's fastest code reader.

The Candler System ad in one of my old copies of "The Radio Amateur's Handbook" states that McElroy won the Asheville code tournament at a speed of 75.2 words per minute. It does not however specify the date of said tournament nor the control conditions thereof.

Nor does Mr. Peters specify the dates or control conditions under which messrs. Pettit and Magarris demonstrated solid copy of one hundred word per minute code.

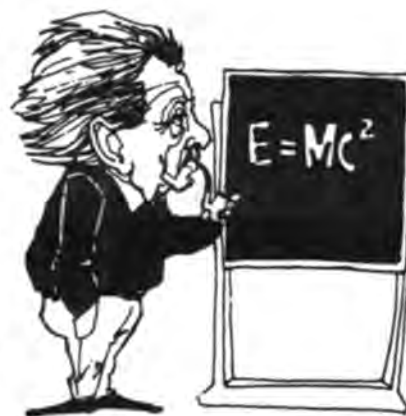
On May 7, 1984 right here in Kelowna I was typing solid copy of one thousand word per minute code being sent to me on a hand key by another local Ham.

Unfortunately the old manual typewriter which I was using at the time was unable to keep pace with such incredible speed and it broke down as did the hand key.

In case you don't believe me, I still have the broken typewriter and hand key to prove it.

Respectfully,  
Norman A. MacLeod - 2627-V  
VE7EGI  
415 El Carlo Road  
Kelowna, BC V1X 2R5

## Tempus Fugit



Some years ago two men, strangers to each other, were sitting together on a subway seat. One of the men was reading a newspaper, on the front page of which was a large photo of Albert Eistein with a story about his discovery of the theory of relativity. The other man was twisting himself in curiosity so that his head was almost in front of the first man's, who patiently

allowed this oafish liberty for a minute or two. Then he quietly pushed the paper over to the other.

"Here, you might as well read it more comfortably," he said.

"No, no!" the second man protested, suddenly realizing he had become a nuisance. "I was just wondering who that guy with the wild hair could be to get such a big splash in the paper."

"Oh, you don't know? That's the great Albert Einstein."

"So? What did he do to get his mug all over the front page?"

The first man realized he had an ignoramus to deal with. "He discovered the wonderful theory of relativity, that's what."

"Rela-what?"

"Relativity."

"What's that, anyway?"

The first man thought for a moment. How could he explain relativity to this simpleton? "Well," he said, "It's like this: Suppose you're kissing a beautiful girl, - the time goes by like lightning, isn't that so?"

"Sure," the second man said, licking his chops.

"But then suppose the girl pushes your naked behind up against a red hot stove, - then a second seems like an hour, doesn't it?"

"That's for sure."

"So you see, it's all a matter of relativity."

The second man looked puzzled. Then he said slowly, "From such foolishness a man makes a living?"

-0o0o0-

This story was a favorite of Eistein's which he was fond of telling about himself.





# YESTERYEARS

Editor - SPARKS JOURNAL

The writer is an old-time radio operator, dating back to the 1914-15 days of loose-couplers and galena/cat-whisker detectors. My actual career began in the Navy, on the U.S.S. Elcano, Yangtze River, 1922. I was a good friend of Karl H.W. Baarslag back in the old glory yachting days of the late 20's and early 30's. We all lost a fine and historic character when he passed on.

I was much interested in the article "I remember Station WSC" by Jan Noordegraaf which appeared on Pages 26 and 27 of the Sparks Journal for April 1984. However there are a few errors, which I will try to correct. One thing sure, WSC was always a high-class radio station, with fine and very competent operators. We used to "work" him all up and down the East Coast with a great deal of pleasure. Of course local Baltimore traffic was handled by WMH. In the N.Y. harbor area there were WNY (RCA) and WSF (MACKAY).

I had been working on the S.S. PONCE (KGP) from Xmas 1927, through most of 1928. This was for the Porto Rico S.S. Co., which also owned the Coamo (WTA), the San Lorenzo (KEZ) and the San Juan (KGJ). They had chartered the S.S. Huron from the Clyde Line, to cover Santo Domingo ports. On Nov. 8, 1928, I left Hamilton Ave., Brooklyn bound for Montecristi, Dominican Republic. Since we carried a large crew and quite a few passengers, there were two operators - of which I was Senior. We had scheduled stops, besides Montecristi, at Puerto Plata, La Romana, San Pedro de Macoris, Santo Domingo City, Azua and Barahona. Of course these varied with passenger and cargo requirements.

My recollection is that I heard the SOS of the Vestris, and informed the Skipper (Master) about it. However he told me that we were too far away to render any assistance. On the following day, however, we picked up three men clinging to a dismasted fishing schooner. This was another victim of the storm that claimed the Vestris.

In the investigation which resulted from the Vestris disaster, it was found that there was a freighter, the Montoso, only a few miles from the Vestris when she sank. However the Montoso carried no radio operator, which were only required at that time on ships having passengers. As a result of the inquiry, a law was passed compelling all vessels to carry at least one radio operator as long as the number of persons on board did not exceed 49. Above that, two or three had to be carried. Also the Auto-Alarm was developed, to alert off-duty operators in case of nearby distress calls.

The Vestris radio call of HWNK is easily explained. On Jan. 1, 1929, all radio ship calls were changed from 3 to 4 letters. HWNK is just the projected Vestris call for 1929, which the Vestris did not live to use. In my own case, I sailed on the Huron on Nov. 8, 1928 with a radio call of KVH. When I returned from Santo Domingo on Jan. 10, 1929, I was amazed to have a new radio call of WADQ !

Thank you for the fine work you are doing with the Sparks Journal. It is much appreciated.

73

S/Frederick Cornman "CO"  
6218 Rte 414  
Valois, New York 14888



"IT HAS BEEN MOVED AND SECONDED THAT WE TURN OVER THE SHIP TO THE WIRELESS OPERATOR AND GET THE HELL OFF OF THIS SHIP!"



## East Coast Nostalgia

PHILLIP H.ELLIS 2203 V

Editor, Sparks Journal:

"I sailed the Atlantic a bit after "Eastcoaster" George Wilkins, having put in just under three years beginning a bit before WWII ended. There were two very distinctive coast station sounds that I could never imagine how the effect was created. Is there anyone that knows?

The North Atlantic rock crusher was GLD, Land's End, running, as I recall, 350 kw, which was a lot for tube transmitters in those days. The nearest imitation of that sound must be the horn of a Model T Ford. The modulation frequencies must have been subaudible, since you couldn't hear the gurgling sound with the BFO off, and may have been more FM than AM. I always wished I had a 'scope to see what the detected audio looked like. The keying also had a slow rise and a long tail that just seemed to fade away after the transmission.

On the other side was WAG, Thomaston, Maine. This signal seemed to have multi-tone modulation that came on with a delay. The transmissions began with "shave and a haircut" beginning in CW with the modulation coming on during the "hair". The tone sounded like a bass chord on an accordion."

## Greetings from Long Island

BY- ROD WARE

Dear Sparks: . . . . .Greetings from Long Island. The de Forest Edition was a great issue, incidentally.

Speaking of de Forest's audion, my first ship, SS Sucarseco, KUPB, in 1928 had a 2KW spark xtr and a single detector-tube receiver with no spare. In case the detector-tube blew, there was a galena crystal and a "cat whisker".

The second night out, from Port Newark, N. J., for San Juan, we had a collision off Cape Henry. I forgot about being sea-sick and hoped the audion wouldn't blow; it didn't. Other ship stove in her bow and had to return to Norfolk. Sucarseco just had a big vertical crease on starboard side just aft of midships. We had a cargo of iron pipe and could have sunk fast but we were making no water.

We had a hull survey at Colon and went on for repairs at Oakland, California where I promptly bought, with my own money, a spare detector ( a 200A, I think ) and a two-stage audio amplifier and loud speaker. . . . . the latter to free me of the headphones in case I had to move around the shack.

On the way back we had a cargo and deck-load of lumber from Aberdeen, Washington ( or Oregon? ) and were probably unsinkable, but the steam condenser sprang a leak ( maybe from the collision ) so we floated around off California for a few hours while the engineers took the condenser apart, found the offending tube, plugged it with a wooden plug at each end and started up again. Back in Port Newark, I thought I'd change ships.

Yours, Rod Ware - 2074-P



# Lost in the South Pacific

HERBERT J SCOTT

At one time in my seagoing days, I was the radio operator on a Norwegian tramp freighter, the only non-Norwegian aboard. As you know, a tramp freighter is a nomad of the sea, wandering over the oceans of the world from one port to another as the cargo loaded at the last port of call dictates.

We were on our way from Calcutta to New Orleans with a cargo of jute, and we had just arrived at the intersection of the equator and the 180th meridian. It was here that we encountered the one combination of elements most feared by sailors on the high seas.

It happened, unfortunately for us, that a simoon, a typhoon, and a monsoon collided head on, and in so doing, produced the most terrifying of all tropical storms, a six-sided revolving twister known as a hexacyclic tornado!

Soon we were in the midst of water spouts like trees in a forest, and we were unmercifully bombarded by nature's artillery of hail stones almost the size of bowling balls.

The gigantic seas nearly tore the ship asunder. At one moment we were propelled like a cannon ball to the terrifying heights of the crest of a wave, and the next moment, with a sickening rush like a ride on a roller coaster, we would plunge into the abysmal depths of the trough between two waves. This continued for three days and four nights.

Finally we emerged into calmer seas and sunshine, and could now assess our damage. The raging sea had washed overboard, along with many other things, our binnacle, our chronometer, and our hydrometer. The only navigational instruments remaining aboard were a jackass quadrant, a nadir, and a table of spherical trigonometric coordinates.

Having been blown far off course by this terrifying storm, and being badly in need of fresh water, we headed for a small island just visible, low down on the horizon. We dropped anchor in the most beautiful lagoon.

The water of the lagoon was a marvelous blue, and myriads of colorful tropical fish could be seen swimming around.

During our exploration of the island, we found not only fresh water in great abundance, but also some of the most unusual flora and fauna, the likes of which seemed to exist nowhere else in the world.

There were a large number of most unusual birds. The skipper, an excellent amateur naturalist, classified them as pyramido bioptic sea parrots, an odd but thoroughly descriptive name.

The term 'pyromido' comes from the fact that its eggs are shaped like a pyramid, rather than being of conventional ovate form; and 'bioptic' because its eyes, instead of being on either side of its head, were placed one in front and one in back.

Because of this positioning of its eyes, its natural enemies are unable to sneak up behind it undetected. Also, while in flight, the pyramido-byoptic sea parrot can, by the simple expedient of closing its front eye and opening its back one, see where it has been, and then, by reversing the process, can look where it is going.

Amongst the flora on the island was the Pinaya tree, the fruit of which was a cross between a pineapple and a papaya. There was also a great abundance of bread fruit trees, just loaded with wonderful loaves waiting to be picked.

The time came much too soon to leave this enchanting island paradise, and finally on a Saturday morning, on the 31st of November, 1921, we upped anchor and sailed out of the lagoon.

The remainder of the trip was without incident and, in due time, we passed through the Panama Canal, continued through the Caribbean to New Orleans, and unloaded our cargo, then, with the storm damage repaired, we loaded a cargo for our next port of call. . . .



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S.S. MAJESTIC - Formerly the German Liner Bismark, launched in 1914 with quadruple screw and turbine made 24 knots. She was ceded to the British Government as war reparation and purchased by White Star in 1921 where she was refurbished and renamed the SS Majestic in 1922 and placed on the Southampton-New York run in May. She was transferred to Cunard-White Star in 1934 and sold to the British Admiralty in 1936. Converted to a boy's training ship, she was renamed HMS CALEDONIA. She was gutted by fire and sank at Rosyth, Eng. Sept. 29 1939. Refloated and towed to Inverkeithing for demolition in 1943. During the 'halcyon days of travel' of the late 'twenties and early thirties' the White Star and United States Lines carried on a running quarrel for years over whether the Majestic or the American Leviathan was the largest ship in the world. [This circular was published circa 1929].

### NAVY BLUES [\*]

By - Lisa Craig

Sailing the Seven Seas  
just a sailor not on leave,  
Came from so far away  
Miss home I'm lonely;  
Just have those Navy Blues  
waiting for happy news  
But my big ship sits and waits for me  
in my little sailor town by-the-sea.

Waiting at Bremerton's ferry dock  
for Seattle at six o'clock,  
Have a blind date at the Space Needle -  
-what will be awaiting me ?  
My paycheck's come and gone,  
It's Navy beans by the ton !  
But my big ship sits and waits for me  
in my little sailor town by-the-sea.

[ \* Sing to Santa Lucia melody ]





A Tale . . . by Fred Rosebury



R

## doctoring by radio

*A Wireless Drama*



### A Radio Officer's Strange Experience on the Tanker Sealube

In those days almost anybody could ship out on a freighter or a tanker - as long as he wasn't an obvious cripple - or female. The time wasn't too far removed from the somewhat earlier days of impressing and shanghaiing drunks and drug sleepers. If you got aboard a ship that was shy a few hands, momentarily on the point of sailing, you were signed on, or made your (X) mark, and nobody asked too many questions.

That was how Lord Liggett came to be a messboy - although he wasn't a boy - in the tanker SS SEALUBE. If Captain Gardner noticed Lord Liggett's yellowish pallor and the dark rings under his eyes he dismissed it as the symptoms of a recent binge. The man spoke clearly and coherently, if a bit softly, and he appeared quite sober. True enough, he looked undernourished and on the frail side. Washing pots and dishes would be about the heaviest work he would be called upon to do and, anyway, there wasn't time to go hunting ashore for a more suitable candidate.

During the several days after the SEALUBE left its berth at Marcus Hook, Liggett went about his work quietly and as though he had had some previous experience at serving the officers' meals, washing up and making up the cabins. The few words he spoke, though noticeably tinged with something like an Oxford accent, were not sufficient to identify him as a member of the British peerage, especially to the linguistically untrained ears of the SEALUBE'S crew, to whom he was pretty much just another "Limey."

One evening when I, the radio operator, was in Third Mate Jim Guffey's small cabin just chewing the fat, Liggett passed by the open door after coming out of the nearby pantry where he had just finished tidying up. He stopped at the door and looked in as though waiting for an invitation. The third mate gave him a friendly smile.

"Nice evening for late September, sir," Liggett said in a low voice that was almost a whisper. "Are you chaps going to be here for a few minutes? There's something I'd like to show you - if you don't mind."

Guffey nodded and I smiled. Not that the sea life was dull - nobody could say that - but any kind of diversion was welcome. Liggett disappeared.

Having spent the first nine years of my young life in London, I remarked to Guffey "You know, Jim, he reminds me a little of my old man - the way he talks, I mean."

"How so?"

"Well, sort of high class, but not altogether, as though he's been hanging out with low-class types, like us. I don't know exactly what it is. My Dad is a great admirer of guys like George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells."

In a few minutes Liggett returned carrying a cheap photo album. It had many snapshots and was bulging with newspaper clippings. He opened it and began explaining the pictures. There was one of Liggett, a teenager in a sailor suit, which he said was taken at the coronation of King George V in 1911. There were many snapshots of Liggett in military uniform - British army officer's, during WW-1. There was one of him in a wheelchair; the story accompanying it alleged that he had been badly gassed and was convalescing at a base hospital in England. The hospital in the background looked more like a baronial mansion with a vast sweep of manicured grounds.

The newspaper clippings attested to the fact that he had served not only in the British Army but in the Royal Navy; also in the U.S. Army and Navy, and that he had been gassed more than once and wounded a dozen or more times in combat. One photo displayed in a clipping showed Lord Liggett receiving a decoration from none other than H.R.H. Edward, the Prince of Wales (afterwards the abdicated King Edward VIII who married Mrs Simpson), and there were other testimonies of his being decorated on various occasions.

Liggett became animated while he was giving this exposition. At first Guffey and I were incredulous but there was no escaping the printed proofs. Lord Liggett went on to say that he had recently lost his "pater" who had left him 25,000 pounds and that he was receiving an income of 2500 pounds a year from his peerage; also more than \$90 a month from the British government as a pension. That alone was almost three times his pay as a messman on the SEALUBE. He added that he owned some Florida land near Miami with a house which he visited from time to time on the occasions of which, as two or three of the clippings showed, he was written up in the society columns of the local papers - as being "entertained by the best people."

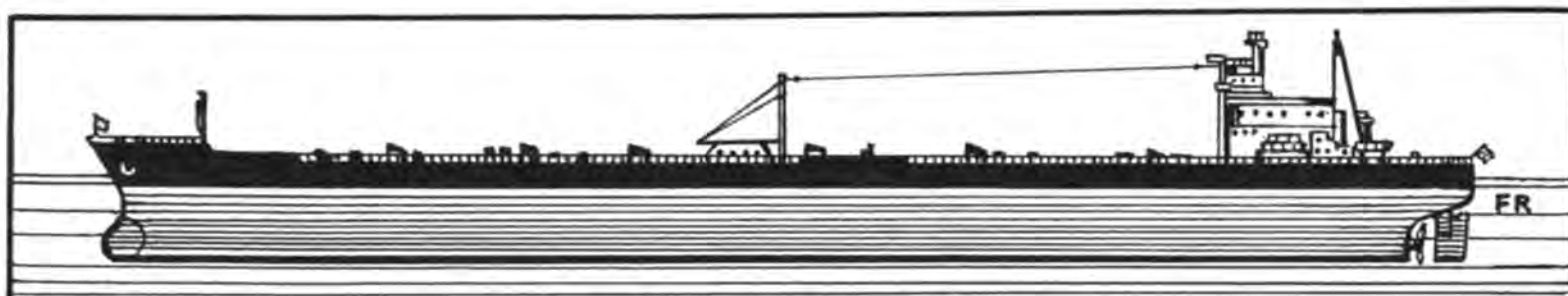
As he piled it on, the story became more and more incredible, yet there it was in black and white.

"Why are you working as a messman?" Guffey asked him, "when you could be living it up like a bigwig?"

To which Lord Liggett replied simply "I like the sea."

"But why the cheapest job on the ship?"

"I don't know. I don't mind it, really. I've been a steward on Lake steamers as well as on ocean ships. It's light work and I like to make myself useful."



DRAWING FROM PEN OF FRED ROSEBURY





SPARKY  
Says—

### "Stranger than fiction!"

"If you'll excuse my saying so," Guffey said, "all this sounds a little fishy. What about your family? Don't you have any folks?"

"Oh," Liggett replied quickly, "I have a great many people - but they don't know where I am or what I'm doing. They would no doubt be greatly shocked to know I'm a menial on an oil tanker. They think I'm on a holiday and I don't want to see anybody." He chuckled a little. "I don't want to be a hermit. The life of a wealthy recluse is not for me. I like to be among people - real people - not, as you Americans say, stuffed shirts; the kind who always go about with their noses in the air as though there's a bad smell, if you know what I mean. Ever since my army days I've found that what my relations would call the lower classes are apt to be just as intelligent as the nobs - or p'raps more so. More interesting, too. And the girls are prettier as well. People who gad about - have nothing useful in the world to do have no - well, no perspective on things. They've no idea what the struggle for existence is all about. They just exist - spend their lives aimlessly. They even make love as though it's a boring and tiresome duty."

Jim and I couldn't help smiling as we listened to this astonishing speech. Nevertheless we couldn't help being impressed, especially by the stuff in the scrapbook. I think Liggett was trying to bid for our companionship rather than trying to show off. It is possible that his speech and shreds of aristocratic bearing may have given his crewmates the impression that he was a bit effeminate. Yet the clippings and photos were surely a convincing testimony to his manhood.

Lord Liggett took himself off presently when he thought he had sufficiently impressed Jim and me.

"What do you think?" Guffey said. "Is he a phony or not?"

"I don't know what to think. The stuff looks right enough."

"That's for sure. But I'll tell you one thing, Sparks. Now that I was able to get a really close look, he didn't seem too healthy."

"Well," I commented, "if all those pictures and clippings are for real, there's no doubt he's been through a lot."

"Yeah, that would account for something all right. But if he's got some disease he's got no business being on an old hooker like the SEALUBE, hundreds of miles from a doctor, especially with all the moolah he claims he has. What would happen if he suddenly was to come down with an attack of - whatever it is?"

"In that case we would get medical advice by radio."

"Yeah, but that's not the same as having a doc look at you."

"No, but it works pretty well as second best."



The skipper appeared at the radio shack on the morning after that appearance of Liggett. "Sparks, I have some bad news. His Lordship is very ill today. I think you had better see if you can get some medical advice: here, I've written out a message with the details."

The message said that Liggett was complaining of violent cramps and had a fever of 102.3°. He was unable to leave his bunk. The skipper gave it a name: cholera morbus. Maybe so.

The Naval coast station at Moorhead City, N.C. said they had no regular doctor on duty. They advised us to call the Coast Guard cutter YAMACRAW which was patrolling the area. She was about 250 miles northwest of us. Liggett himself thought he had appendicitis.

After exchanging several messages with the CG YAMACRAW (while Capt. Gardner got a bit of exercise running up and down between the fo'cstle and the radio shack; he probed and squeezed the patient's belly), appendicitis was ruled out - and so was cholera morbus. We had no way of doing a blood count, which was suggested. Two of the major symptoms which caught the YAMACRAW'S medical man's attention and gave a clue was the statement that Liggett's urine was cloudy and his skin was a sort of yellow color. In response I got this message:

TAKE A SPECIMEN OF URINE AND PUT IT IN A TEST TUBE AND HEAT IT OVER A BURNER AND THEN REPORT WHAT HAPPENS.

Test tube? Burner? The doctor must have pictured the old rusty SEALUBE with a nice shiny clinical laboratory aboard. Well, what to do?

By this time a group of off-duty crewmen were trying to crowd into the radio shack. The chief engineer pushed forward when he heard the skipper read the words about a test tube and a burner.

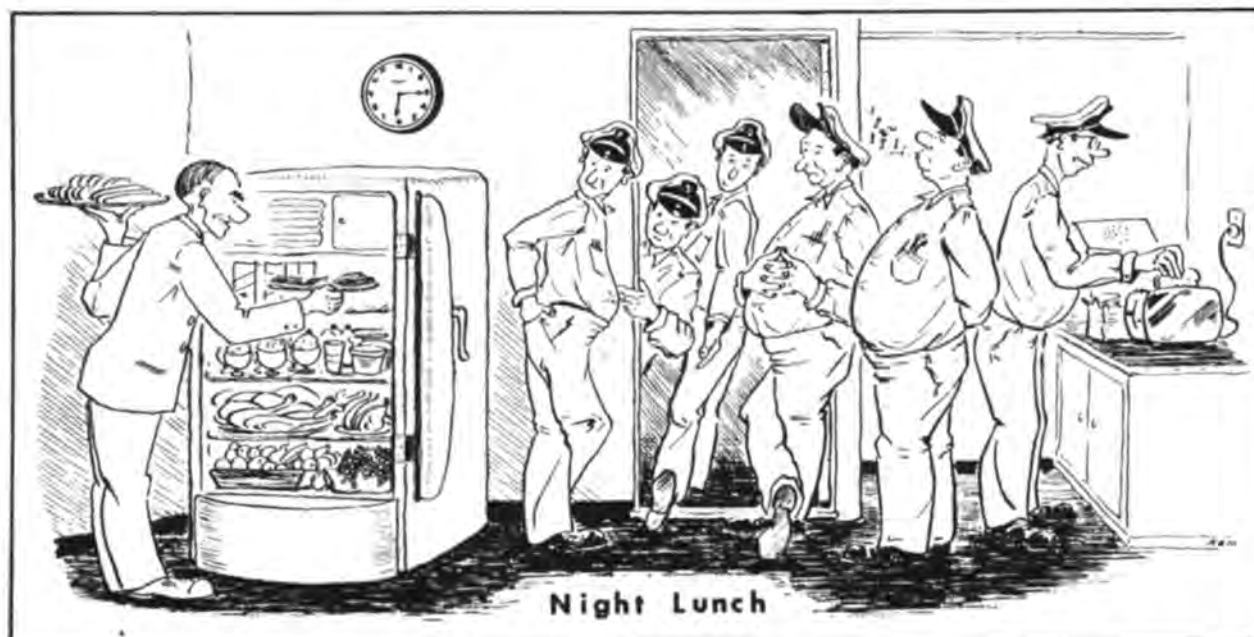
"Hey, wait!" he said. "I have some small glass vials with oil samples. I'll go below and clean out a few with naphtha - maybe we can use them?"

"And what about a burner?"

Another voice said "What about a candle, or even matches?"

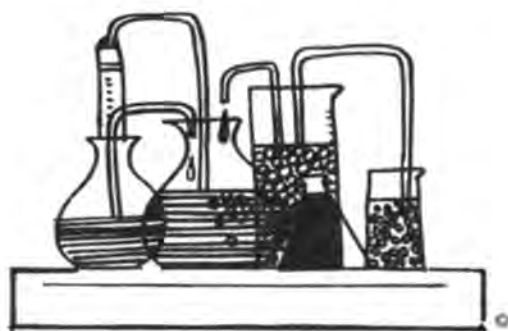
Well, that's the way the "clinical test" was done. Liggett was asked to urinate into a clean bucket. We didn't have any utensil that more closely resembled a hospital urinal, and he said he was too

(Continued on Page 20)



Night Lunch





## Deep Sea Doctoring



weak to get out of his bunk. It was a messy job of decanting some of the turbid and foul-smelling urine into those tiny vials. The chief volunteered. He did it competently enough with a grimace and with the aid of a flashlight held by one of the seamen. A candle was produced and, as per instructions, heat was applied to one of the vials. A hush fell over the on-lookers as though they were watching the crisis of a gripping play.

"Good grief!" the chief yelled as the vial cracked and spilled the contents on his hand. But he quickly recovered and wiped it off with a piece of cotton waste. Then he took a second vial, this time bringing the candle to bear more cautiously.

Presto! The thin mist dramatically turned heavy, even thick. The chief wiped off the soot with his cotton waste and held it up to the flashlight. The "experiment" was repeated with a third vial with the same result. Each time there was a chorus from the audience, just as though they were watching a tense baseball game and a player had hit one over the fence. The skipper reported the results to me and I called the YAMACRAW. I was told to stand by for further advice. In a few minutes the message came back:

PATIENT SUFFERING FROM ACUTE STAGE OF CHRONIC NEPHRITIS PROBABLY WITH SOME LIVER INVOLVEMENT STOP NOT APPENDICITIS STOP URINE TURBIDITY IS UNDIGESTED ALBUMIN SHOWS KIDNEYS NOT FUNCTIONING NORMALLY STOP CANNOT PRESCRIBE TREATMENT WITHOUT SEEING PATIENT WHICH NOT POSSIBLE STOP URGE YOU HEAD IN TOWARD JACKSONVILLE AT ONCE WHERE NAVY WILL ARRANGE TRANSFER TO HOSPITAL STOP WE WILL NOTIFY PROPER AUTHORITIES WHEN WE KNOW YOUR ETA AT ST JOHNS RIVER STOP PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED SIG R A MILLER MD USCG

I handed this to Capt. Gardner who read it and scratched his head. "Well, it's going to delay us a bit but I guess it can't be helped." He went into the chart room and did some plotting, then ordered a change of course. He also scribbled a message to be sent to the ship's agents, also one for Dr Miller. The ETA at St John's River was given as 25 hours from the present time and as the ship's normal speed was 11-12 knots it meant we were about 300 miles from Jacksonville. What looks like a nice short, straight line on a maritime chart turns out to be a slow painful crawl in this case.

I sent the messages without delay, the one to the YAMACRAW first.

Liggett suffered more than ever during that day. In the absence of any advice about medication the skipper was opposed to giving Liggett anything from the ship's meager medicine chest. Somebody suggested booze. There was a bottle of Jamaica rum in a locked cabinet, a standard but somewhat discredited remedy for pain. The skipper vetoed that idea. "With his liver and kidneys in bad shape, liquor might do him in for sure." He pored over the only medical book on the ship, a volume dated fifty years earlier; it was no help. The entire crew seemed to be suffering in sympathy.

At the messtable the chief said he was putting all the steam he safely could on the old hooker. The skipper responded by saying he was glad the weather was favorable. Nevertheless there was a general feeling that Liggett could die but no one actually mentioned that possibility. The sick man's groans and occasional screams could be heard all over the ship, adding to the general tension. The SEALUBE



gallantly cut through the sea at a steady pace. I was sure I could detect the abnormal laboring of the turbines which were directly beneath my quarters. At the next noon reckoning it was seen that we were doing a shade better than 12 knots which would bring us to the north Florida point late that afternoon.

"Are you still in touch with the YAMACRAW?" the skipper asked me. I replied that I was. "Tell them we'll arrive at rivermouth close to six p.m., 75th Meridian time."

It took a couple of calls for me to raise the cutter. Then NRY responded loud and clear. I gave them the captain's message.

DO NOT ANCHOR STOP A NAVY LAUNCH WITH MEDICS AND EQUIPMENT WILL COME OUT TO MEET YOU STOP HOIST A RED FLAG IF BY DAYLIGHT OR A RED LIGHT AFTER DARK

The reckoning was very close. When I heard the engine-room telegraph signal STOP ENGINES my clock said 5:53 p.m. It was still daylight. I stayed at my post in case I should be needed for further communication. Glancing outside I saw the red flag - also a red lantern high up on the foremast halyard. And sure enough, right on schedule I heard the putt-putt of a launch. A line was thrown to it, fenders and a jack-ladder were lowered over the side as the boat came alongside in smart Navy style. Several uniformed men swarmed up the ladder in close order and a rigid stretcher was hoisted up. The leader, a CPO, was saluted by Capt. Gardner and immediately conducted to the sick man's bunk in the after quarters. Liggett was moaning dismally. His strength seemed to be ebbing fast and he looked awful. The Navy men placed him gently in the stretcher; he seemed to be unaware of what was happening. The movements of the medics were swift and expert. Wrapped in a Navy blanket and strapped in, they carried him to the side where he was lowered without bumping into the launch, which almost on the instant pushed off and was speeding shoreward. Within a few minutes the SEALUBE was on her way too.

Some months later the charter with the Sun Oil Company was completed. The SEALUBE, small in comparison with the newer tankers, was sold to a British company to carry molasses as her shallower draft allowed her to touch at out-of-the-way places in the West Indies. Consequently the entire crew including Captain Gardner were laid off. I went back to New York and was soon assigned to another ship, the new Socony tanker SS DIXIE ARROW. By a happy coincidence Jim Guffey was second mate. We had a cordial reunion.

"I suppose you heard about Lord Liggett?" He asked when we had an opportunity to talk.

"Don't tell me," I said. "He kicked the bucket, poor guy."

"Wrong! I heard through a Navy friend of mine that he made a miraculous recovery and went to live with the blue-bloods in Miami after he got out of the hospital. He went around telling everybody that we saved his life."

"We?"

"The crew of the SEALUBE."

Well, I suppose we did. But it was not more nor less than our human duty. What really saved his life was the radio.

- Fred Rosebury 1570-SGP





# How Wireless Has Served the Sea

**SPECIAL NOTICE:** Please read from left to right in the upper sections of Pages 21 and 22 and then continue on the bottom sections. These are reprinted from Wireless Age Apr. 1916.

up and down the coast, managed finally to reach the place of the disaster and rescue the men and women on the disabled Dimock.

The wireless next served its purpose in the rescue of endangered passengers on the steamship Ohio, which was rammed and sunk by a craft off the Alaskan coast on August 27. Vessels which responded to her calls for help saved 200 lives.



Lowering fogs, through which the helmsman guides the ship's uncertain way, are the most prolific causes of collisions, as can be seen in

this summary of such events. The siren's voice is deadened and the location of the oncoming vessel is rendered uncertain by the ocean haze. It is the wireless only that can bring help to the stricken ships. Such was the case with the steamer Merida, of the Ward Line, which, on May 12, 1911, while off the Virginia Capes in a heavy fog-bank, bound for New York from Vera Cruz and Havana, was struck midships by the Admiral Farragut, on her way from Philadelphia to Jamaica. The wireless distress call was launched, and responded to by the steamship Hamilton, to which vessel all persons on board the two colliding ships were transferred before the Merida sank. The Admiral Farragut was helplessly disabled.

Next occurred the greatest marine disaster in world's history, when the Titanic, the largest passenger liner of her time, on April 15, 1912, came into collision with an iceberg and went to the bottom of the Atlantic, carrying with her nearly 1,400 lives. More than half that number of persons were saved, however, through the steadfast courage and self-sacrifice of the Marconi wireless operators, Phillips, the senior, and Harold Bride, his assistant.

Bride described the scene in the wireless room of the Titanic as follows:

"Phillips and I were in the room. 'Send a call for assistance,' ordered the Captain, barely putting his head in the door.

"What shall I send?" asked Phillips. "The regulation international call for help. Just that," was the reply.

"Phillips began to read C Q D. 'Send S O S,' I said. 'It's the new call, and it may be your last chance to send it.'

"We picked up first the steamship Frankfurt. The Carpathia answered then, and we told her our position and said we were sinking by the head. Phillips told me the wireless was growing weaker. The Captain came and told us our engine rooms were taking water and that the dynamos might not last much longer. We sent that word to the Carpathia.

"How poor Phillips worked through it I don't know. He was a brave man. We picked up the Olympic and told her we were sinking by the head. As Phillips was sending the message I strapped his life belt to his back. Then came the Captain's voice: 'Men, you have done your full duty. You can do no more. Abandon your cabin. Now it's every man for himself.' Phillips clung on, sending and sending. He clung on for about ten minutes or maybe fifteen minutes after the Captain had released him. Water was then coming into our cabin. Phillips ran aft, and that's the last I ever saw of him alive."

Bride was washed off the foundering vessel, swam to the surface and was pulled aboard a boat and saved. His senior went with the other souls to the bottom.

Another scene of this ocean drama is related by Howard Thomas Cottam, wireless operator aboard the Carpathia, the ship of rescue:

"I got the Titanic C Q D call at 11:20 o'clock on Sunday night. It was this: 'Come at once. We've struck a berg. It's a C Q D call, old man.'



the boat, Kuehn missed his footing and fell into the water. He managed to keep afloat for a while, during which time efforts were made to rescue him, but the water was too cold and he finally sank, after having given up his life to save another. The Monroe sank ten minutes after the collision. Forty-three lives were lost and ninety-eight persons rescued as a result of the help that arrived in answer to the distress call.



Again this lesson of courage and strict attention to duty was heralded to the world, several months later, when two wireless telegraphers on a sinking liner, at the risk of their lives, sped the message of disaster to the nearest shore.

The Empress of Ireland, bound for Liverpool, had left Montreal on May 27 in a thick fog. When in the St. Lawrence River, 150 miles from Quebec and ten miles from Rimouski, she came into collision with the Danish collier Storstad, with fifty men aboard, feeling her way through the fog, inward bound. The collier crashed into the liner and tore her side open to the stern. The two Marconi operators on board the Empress were Ronald Ferguson, senior, and Edward Bamford, his assistant. While the vessel began to list, the operators quickly sent out the S O S, reaching the land operator at Father Point. Then the lights went out aboard the Empress, she careened and sank.

Meantime, the operator at Father Point sent word to the Canadian government boats Eureka and Lady Evelyn, which steamed to the scene of the disaster. They found 452 survivors in the lifeboats of the Empress, among whom were the two operators. The death list of the disaster was placed at 1,024, and the prompt work of the Marconi operators undoubtedly served to save those who were rescued from the foundered vessel.

On the morning of August 25, of the same year, the steamship Admiral Sampson, owned by the Pacific Alaska Navigation Company, was feeling her

way carefully along her course, off Point-no-Point, near Seattle, Wash. The greater number of the passengers were asleep in their berths, but some of them, aroused by the siren, had come on deck. The Princess Victoria, of the Canadian Pacific Line, was also making her way through the fog in much the same cautious manner as the Sampson. Fog whistles on both vessels sounded continuously, but the thick mist blanketed the warnings. The Victoria rammed the Sampson, a steel vessel, directly on a line with the after hatch, cut three-fourths of the way through her, and opened a twelve-foot gash in her own steel plates, in which the cover of the Sampson's hatch was still jammed when the Canadian Pacific liner arrived in Seattle with the survivors.

The vessels were so close together that the majority of the Sampson's passengers were able to climb on board the Victoria. The bow of the Victoria entered the side of the Sampson at a point where a considerable quantity of fuel oil was stored and crushed several large containers. They were set ablaze, and in an instant both vessels were enveloped in flames. When the Victoria backed away, the Sampson's side was left uncovered and she began to settle and went to the bottom four minutes after she was struck.

W. E. Reker was the senior wireless operator on the Sampson, and while the vessel was foundering, he made his way to the Captain on the bridge, preferring to share whatever fate overtook his commander rather than seek safety by leaving the doomed craft. The two men faced death fearlessly in the line of their respective duties, and were drowned. Not less praiseworthy was the conduct of H. F. Wiehr, the junior Marconi operator. He stayed on the Sampson until the last, finally being compelled to jump over the side, and was picked up by one of the lifeboats.

Meantime the wireless operator on



Then the Titanic operator followed with his position, which was latitude 41:46 north and longitude 50:14 west. I think I received the C Q D seven to ten minutes after the Titanic struck. It was only by a streak of luck that I got the message. After hearing the Frankfurt, then I heard the Olympic calling the Titanic with a service message.

"All this time we were hearing the Titanic sending her wireless out over the sea in a last call for help. 'We are sinking fast,' was one which I picked up being sent to the Olympic. Just before we reached the Titanic I got this message, and it was the last one I received: 'Come quick, our engine room is flooded up to the boilers.' I answered that our boats were ready, and for them to get theirs ready also, and that we were doing our utmost to get there in time. Until we reached the spot where the Titanic foundered, I was listening for a spark from his emergency set, and when I didn't hear it, I was sure he had gone down."

Owing to its speed and the vast distances it travels, wireless aid is distinguished from all other forms of safeguard at sea by the promptness with which it communicates the story of disaster, and brings rescuers to the stricken ship. It was this feature of prompt service that saved all the lives aboard the steamship Madison, on February 22, 1912, when she was rammed by the Hippolyte Dumois; and resulted in the preservation of the El Sud in April, of that year, when she came into collision with the steamship Denver off Galveston Bar. The El Sud was not equipped with wireless, but, fortunately for her, the Denver was, and in response to calls sent out by the latter, assistance came and the injured steamship was towed into Galveston.

Similar promptitude on the part of Arthur Ridley, of Ridge Hill, Mass., the Marconi operator on the Millinocket, in summoning a tug and a lighter, when that vessel was struck

by the steamship Persian on July 24, 1913, resulted in the successful docking of the injured ship. A wireless appeal for assistance brought an equally prompt response to the steamship Pleiades, in October of the same year, when she was struck by an unknown steamship off the Pacific coast. A tug-boat appeared in answer to the call and towed the Pleiades to port in safety. There would undoubtedly have been great loss of life in an accident which occurred ninety-five miles south of Hatteras on November 1, had there not been a speedy response to the radio call. The steamship Norwegian came into collision with the schooner Glenlui, tearing a hole in her side of such enormous size that she rapidly filled with water. A passenger vessel, two revenue cutters and a battleship were soon at hand and saved all on board.

The fine spirit of devotion that typifies the Marconi service was next exemplified by the heroic conduct of a wireless operator, who sacrificed his life in humanity's cause. It was in a heavy fog off Hog Island, sixty miles from Cape Charles, on the morning of January 30, 1914, that the Old Dominion Line steamship Monroe came into collision with the smaller ship, the Nantucket, of the Merchants' and Miners' Transportation Company. Ferdinand J. Kuehn, chief wireless operator on the Monroe, who was in the operating room when the accident occurred, notified his assistant, R. S. Etheridge, and sent the S O S call. Etheridge fetched two life preservers, and while one was being put on by Kuehn, Etheridge continued sending out the S O S, giving the position of the Monroe which was sinking rapidly.

Etheridge then dashed for a lifeboat and was picked up by the Nantucket. Kuehn was standing on deck when a woman ran toward him. "Where is your life preserver?" he asked. "I have none. Oh, I am lost," she cried. Kuehn took off the one he wore and fastened it upon her. Then he led her to the rail and helped her over. Attempting to enter



Walter Seddon, first operator on the Volturno



Christopher Pennington, second operator on the Volturno

the Victoria had sent out the S O S call, which was picked up at the Marconi station at Seattle, and established communication with the steamship Admiral Watson, which came to the aid of the injured vessel.

The steamship Metapan, of the United Fruit Company's Line, on October 15, was rammed in the fog by the freighter Iowan, of the Hawaiian-American Line, at the entrance of Ambrose Channel, New York Harbor, and sank. When the collision occurred the wireless operator on the Metapan sent out a call for assistance, which was responded to by vessels in various parts of the harbor, and all on board were rescued.

On January 24 of the following year, the Washingtonian, of the Hawaiian-American Line, came into collision with the five-masted schooner Elizabeth Palmer, off Delaware Breakwater. The Washingtonian sank, and the schooner was abandoned with her decks awash, only one life having been lost. Captain E. D. Brodhead, of the Washingtonian, ordered the lifeboats to be made ready, and into them the crew of forty-odd men tumbled. There were also thirteen men and one woman on the schooner. All made their way safely to a lightship, and wireless messages sent from the station there summoned the steamship Hamilton, of the Old Dominion Line, which stopped and took aboard the victims of the wrecks, and conveyed them to New York.

But it is not only in the solitude of midocean or in the perilous channel that the wireless teaches the lesson of its superb value. Its service is as efficient on the lake or the inland water course. This was shown on March 25, 1915, when the steamship Parisian grounded in the Mississippi River. While in this position she was struck two days later by the Heredia, of the United Fruit Company, which had 164 passengers aboard. Wireless brought prompt aid to the two distressed vessels.

On May 26, 1915, the S O S aided

in the rescue of 230 passengers who were aboard the Holland-American liner Ryndam, which was in collision with the fruit steamer Joseph J. Cuneo, south of the Nantucket Shoals. Water poured in torrents into the hole which the Cuneo tore in the side of the Ryndam, and the bows of the fruit steamer were stove in, she also taking water rapidly. On board the Ryndam were two Marconi operators, B. Moore, senior, and A. T. A. Le Clercq, his assistant. They sent out the distress signal while the passengers were being transferred to the Cuneo, which was the least damaged of the two vessels. The battleships South Carolina, Texas, Louisiana and Michigan responded to the call, and the South Carolina took aboard the passengers who had sought safety on the fruit steamer. No lives were lost.

Even in casualties at sea, where the wireless is not the direct means of saving life, or ship or cargo, the mere fact that the service is at hand, ready for immediate use, brings solace and hope to those endangered. This is made evident in the following list of accidents: On June 13 of the same year there was a collision between the Metropolitan Line steamship Bunker Hill, bound from New York to Boston, with 250 passengers, and the steam yacht of C. K. G. Billings, the Vanadis, in a fog off Eaton's Neck, L. I. Two persons were killed and several injured as a result of the accident. Ingalls and Pitts, Marconi operators on the Bunker Hill, sent Marconigrams to New York, giving news of the accident. The Bunker Hill returned under her own steam, and several vessels which had received the wireless message volunteered their aid, which, however, was not needed.

The pilot boat New Jersey was rammed and sunk by the United Fruit steamer Marchioneal at the eastern entrance to Ambrose Channel on July 10, 1915. The crew was saved by the Marchioneal, and S O S calls brought assistance, which, again, was not needed.



Ferdinand J. Kuehn, wireless operator on the Monroe



Raphael Emanuel, the Templemore's operator



(Continued from Page 21)

### Sixteen Years of Triumphant Achievements of an Unerring System and a Brave Devotion to Duty

The presence of wireless apparatus lent courage and steadiness to those aboard the steamship *Dorchester*, when, on May 28, she was rammed by the schooner *J. A. Palmer*, off Annapolis, Md., and the aerial message was utilized to apprise the world that no lives had been lost. And when, on June 16, the steamship *Alabama* was struck by the Delaware, fifty-three miles south of Scotland Lightship in a dense fog, and neither vessel suffered serious damage, wireless was used to relieve the anxiety of the owners. Also on February 1, 1916, when the *Takata Maru* came into collision with the *Silver Shell*, the fact that the last-named vessel had rescued the former's crew was sent by wireless to the Marconi stations at Boston and Cape Race.

There is probably no danger that is dreaded more by the seaman or the sea traveler, than the ship afire. Storms may be outlived, and the ship with broken propeller blades may drift, but flight, as a rule, is the only salvation from the burning ship. But the aerial message brings aid so swiftly to those marooned on flaming vessels of late years that the dread of this form of calamity has been materially lessened.

Plying between Panama and Peruvian ports, the steamer *Huallaga*, of the Peruvian Dock & Steamship Company, took fire at sea on July 20, 1910, off the north coast of Peru. In fighting the flames, three of her seamen perished. Wireless operators flashed the S O S which was received by the steamship *Ucayali*. Making all haste, the rescuing vessel arrived in time to take off all the passengers and the remainder of the crew. Three days later, July 23, the *Momus*, of the Southern Pacific Company, bound from New York to New Orleans, took fire south of Cape Hatteras. Under the directions of Captain Boyd, the crew fought the flames for hours, but the fight becoming hopeless, the Captain summoned aid by means of the wireless. The steamship *Comus* responded to the call, not only taking off the passengers safely, but assisting in subduing the flames. The cargo and vessel,

valued at \$3,000,000, were saved. Again, on January 25, 1911, the *Queen*, of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, while off Point Reyes, Cal., developed fire in her forward hold. The distress call brought four steamers to her assistance and the crew and eighty-seven passengers were saved.

The year 1913 was one in which there occurred an unusual number of fires at sea. Never before did the Marconi wireless service have a better opportunity to prove its utility. On June 10 of that year, the *Olinda*, of the Munson Line, with five passengers aboard, caught fire at sea. In response to the S O S call, the U. S. S. *Nashville* went to her assistance and took off the passengers in safety. Fire started on the British steamship *Templemore* on September 29 while she was on a voyage from Baltimore to Liverpool. Raphael Emanuel, the Marconi operator on board, sent out the distress signal, which was picked up by the steamship *Arcadia*, fifty miles away. While the *Arcadia* was hurrying to the burning ship's relief, the *Templemore* was consumed by the flames, 800 miles east of the Virginia Capes. Passengers and crew were in the lifeboats when the rescuer arrived and took them aboard. During October the steamship *Berkshire* was burned off Look-out Cove, N. C. The S O S call was heard at Wilmington, 164 miles away, by the revenue cutter *Seminole*, which reached the scene of disaster in time to take off all the passengers. After the flames were extinguished the following day the vessel was towed to a safe anchorage.

Of all the marine disasters of that fateful year, the most sensational was the burning of the immigrant ship *Volturno*, which was ablaze from stem to stern in a terrific storm in the Atlantic, 450 miles east of Newfoundland, on Thursday, October 9. Wireless calls fleetly over the ocean, brought ten vessels to the rescue, but for more than twenty-four hours they were compelled to cruise about the flaming vessel, incapable of rendering help because of the fierce wind and turbulent sea. It was not until the next morn-

ing that it was found possible to transfer passengers. Of the persons aboard, 521 were rescued. The others, numbering 136 souls, lost their lives in the raging seas, which smashed the lifeboats against the sides of the *Volturno* and spilled their human freight into the water.

The Marconi wireless operators on the *Volturno* were Walter Seddon and Christopher Pennington. Pennington performed his duties courageously while menaced by peril and escaped from the vessel by leaping into the sea. Seddon was an occupant of the last boat that left the doomed craft.

With seas running so high that it was seemingly impossible for small craft to live in the waves, 103 passengers of the Spanish steamer *Balmes*, which was threatened with destruction by flames, were taken from the burning vessel by the *Pannonia*, of the Cunard Line, on November 14, after aid had been summoned by the Marconi wireless. The rescue occurred 600 miles east of Bermuda. While Captain Ruiz, of the *Balmes*, and his men battled with the flames, Inocencio V. Michavila, senior Marconi operator, began sending the S O S. The *Pannonia* was 287 miles distant from the burning ship when the call of distress was received by the senior Marconi operator, Stanley G. Rattee. His assistant, Edward Murphy, who was in the ship's hospital, crawled from his berth to the wireless room to aid his comrade in gaining the location of the distressed vessel. The *Pannonia* rescued 125 persons from the burning ship. At the time of the rescue the crew of the *Balmes* was reduced to the last degree of exhaustion, and the firemen lay about the deck so overcome, as a result of asphyxiation, that they had to be relieved every fifteen minutes.

The freighter *Columbian*, bound from Antwerp to New York, caught fire on May 3, 1914, while 300 miles south of Cape Race. The members of the crew were driven to take refuge in the lifeboats, and fifteen of them perished. Thirteen of the survivors were picked up by the steamship *Franconia*,

of the Cunard Line, fifty hours after the men aboard the ship had been driven to the boats by a serious explosion of unknown origin. Among those taken on board the *Franconia* was James Drohan, the Marconi operator on the *Columbian*. This rescue was made possible by the receipt by wireless of news of the disaster by the *Franconia's* Captain from other ships that had passed the burning *Columbian* after she had been deserted by her men. The Cunarder searched for the boats of the survivors and picked up the one containing the thirteen men. The Cunarder, by wireless, then cautioned other vessels to be on the lookout for the missing boats of the *Columbian*, which resulted in the rescue of the remaining survivors by the *Manhattan* and the *Seneca*. In all thirty-one lives were saved.

On September 1, while the *City of Chicago*, twelve miles out from Chicago, was learned to be on fire, apprehensions regarding the safety of those aboard were quieted by the comforting assurance, transmitted by wireless, that the vessel was in no danger, and in time she returned safely to port.

Another spectacular marine disaster, which caused much anxiety to the friends and relatives of those aboard the vessel, was the fire of mysterious origin on the French liner *La Touraine*, bound from New York to Havre, with a cargo of ammunition. An S O S call sent out by the liner on March 6, 1915, apprised the world that a serious fire had developed on board and that the flames were spreading at an alarming rate. The call was promptly answered by the steamships *Arabic*, *Cornishman*, *Swanmore* and *Rotterdam*. The *Rotterdam* was the first to arrive, and announced her readiness to take off the passengers, but by that time the crew had made headway against the flames. The *Rotterdam*, however, remained nearby, ready to lend aid, and escorted *La Touraine* as far as Prawl Point, where two French cruisers came in sight and convoyed the injured vessel to Cherbourg.

This year also was one prolific of fires. In the month of May two ves-

sels were saved from destruction by the prompt summoning of aid by wireless. The steamship *Standard* was at sea in latitude 22:50 north, longitude 88:18 west, on May 18, when fire was discovered in her oil-fuel bunkers. The distress calls brought the steamships *Bradford*, *Winifred* and *Alfonso* to the scene. They fought and extinguished the flames and the *Bradford* towed the disabled vessel into Key West. On May 28 the steamer *Mackinaw* was on fire off San Francisco, and wireless calls brought tugs to the assistance of the burning vessel.

Alarm occasioned by a fire on board the steamship *Sucha*, on July 22, while in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, was emphasized by signals for help sent out from the ship and received by the *Royal George*. The latter proceeded to the rescue, but received word later that the fire had been controlled and help was no longer needed, which cheering information was promptly sent to shore by wireless.

Nearly 500 persons, abandoning a burning vessel in midocean, were rescued from their distress through the beneficent aid of the Marconi wireless service on September 11, when the Greek liner *Athenai*, bound from New York to Piraeus, caught fire. The vessel was entirely destroyed. The passengers and crew, numbering 470 souls, crowded in lifeboats, were rescued by the *Tuscania* and the Roumanian *Prince*. Two days later the lives of more than 1,700 persons were saved through the summoning of assistance by aerial messages. The *Fabre* Line steamship *Sant' Anna*, from New York to Naples, was thronged with 1,700 Italian reservists when she caught fire in midocean. The S O S call brought the *Ancona* to the scene. She took off 600 persons and convoyed the distressed vessel to port.

On November 1 the steamship *Rochambeau* sent out wireless calls, stating that she was on fire, which were immediately answered by nearby vessels. The ship, however, sent messages subsequently, stating that the fire was under control and that assistance was not required. In this in-

stance, as in others, failing in the wireless service, the world would have undergone anxious days of waiting before this cheering news could have reached land.

Another instance occurred, where, without the prompt assistance obtained by wireless, a vessel and her cargo would have been a total loss, when, on November 9, the steamship *Lievatta*, loaded with cased kerosene and gasoline, caught fire sixty-five miles east of Sabine Bar, Texas. The danger was reported by aerial message to the steamship *Gulfstream*, which arrived and stood by the burning ship until other assistance, summoned by wireless, arrived from Port Arthur and Galveston.

Such is the record to date of the value of the Marconi service in lessening that dreaded danger of navigation, "the ship afire at sea."

The aerial message serves unexpected ends. Many an injured seaman owes his well being, if not his life, to the fact that aid was summoned on his behalf from some doctor or surgeon hundreds of miles distant, when no other help was available.

While the oil steamer *Asuncion* was off the port of Eureka, Cal., on March 11, 1909, the Humboldt wireless station received from her a message saying that one of the sailors had fallen from the rigging to the deck, sustaining injuries resulting in severe internal hemorrhages. Medical advice was solicited for the injured man. The wireless station at once communicated with the marine physician, Dr. Charles Falk, who prescribed treatment. The vessel remained hove to until the directions of the physician had been received by wireless, when she proceeded on her way, while the remedies presumably were applied.

Captain McGray, of the steamship *Herman Frasch*, was stricken with ptomaine poisoning and at the point of death, January 2, 1911. A wireless message was promptly sent to physicians of the United States naval station at Dry Tortugas, Florida, about 100 miles away. The operator of the *Merida*, which was leaving the harbor

of Progreso, Yucatan, about 800 miles away, caught Captain McGray's message asking for a prescription and method of treatment. The reply, written by the surgeon on the *Merida* was received on board the *Herman Frasch* before the naval station at Dry Tortugas could respond. Captain McGray, following directions, prepared a remedy from his medicine chest and soon recovered.

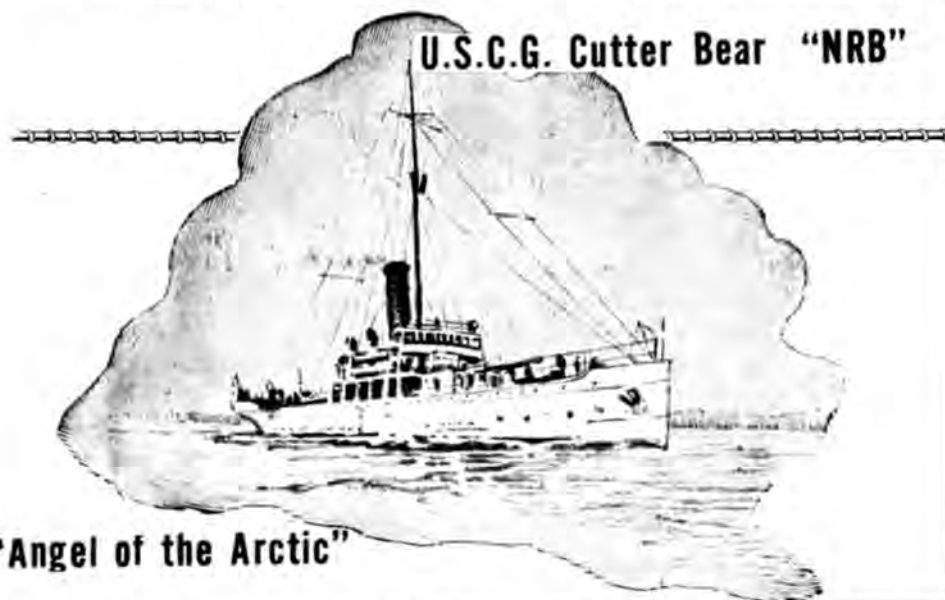
Dr. Ernestus O. Kuhr, of Brooklyn, New York, was aboard the Ward liner *Esperanza*, in March, 1913, when, on nearing Havana, the vessel's wireless caught a call for medical aid. The call came from the *Altastad*, a Norwegian freighter. It was explained that William Murray, a Marconi tester aboard, had his arm badly infected. The doctor told him that the case was one for immediate operation, and advised the opening of the arm with a sharp, properly sterilized penknife. He instructed the patient to use carbolic acid freely, and sent detailed instructions for dressing the wound.

A wireless call for a surgeon was sent out by the Marconi operator on the steamship *John A. Hooper*, in Sep-

tember, 1915. The appeal brought aid to Miss Annie Christiansen, a passenger who, during a severe storm, fell to the floor of her stateroom, sustaining a fractured leg. Aid was rendered by a surgeon on the steamship *Alliancia*, which, although thirty-five miles away, responded to the call. The sufferer received directions by which she could alleviate her distress temporarily. The doctor, however, advised that the patient be sent to the nearest hospital, which was at Kingston, Jamaica, where the young woman was taken.

A wireless call was sent out from the steamship "Radiant," on October 11, 1915, asking for the proper treatment to be extended to the ship's engineer, who, for three days, had remained unresponsive to medicines administered by the captain. The Marconi operator, William C. Thompson, communicated with the station at Tampa, Florida, and then with the Southern Pacific steamship *Comus*, from which the doctor's advice was obtained, and the sick man was greatly relieved.

These are only a small part of the achievements of the wireless message, which insures comfort and safety to those who go down to the sea in ships.





## Wireless Via the Back Door Route

Ralph N. Chase

It was largely by chance that certain things happened to me in 1917 that would later make me eligible for membership in the Wireless Pioneers. On October 17, 1915 in Los Angeles I took the examination for first grade commercial under Ellery W. Stone, Assistant Radio Inspector. I passed it and thus came into possession of Commercial First Grade ticket #12420. My only reason for getting an operator license was that one was necessary to get a ham station license. An amateur grade ticket would have done the job, but John Waters (later John E. Waters, DDS), pre-station license call QW, then 6QW when licensing caught up with us, urged me to go for the first grade commercial. The ham station license I acquired was assigned the call 6QR. As I remember it, 6QR and 6QW were the only "Q" calls assigned at that time.

In August, 1916, I went to Berkeley via SS Congress and entered the college of engineering of the University of California. On April 30, 1917, along with some others from the university I enlisted in the Naval Reserve. We didn't even take the final examinations but we got credit for the year's work. So far as I know I am still on leave from the university. However, at my age I doubt if I will ever go back and finish!

After several months' duty at a listening station in Monterey, California, with Harry Greene and A.W. Martin, followed by six weeks' duty on San Francisco Light Vessel with Walt Maynes, I was assigned to KPH. I have a feeling that the Navy looked upon old KPH as perhaps just a step-child. At any rate, here I was, just a young squirt with a first grade ticket with not a single indorsement in the service record, assigned to a coveted berth at KPH with Dick Johnstone, Frank Shaw and A.W. Peterson. The Navy certainly gave the Marconi seniority system the deep six. While there I also met Ed Jorgensen and B.C. McDonald.

The land link to KPH was a Morse wire to downtown San Francisco. Even the press which KPH broadcast every morning came in over that wire. My first code practice had been with a sounder using the Morse code, so I did know the code, but I'll never forget the first night I tied into that press. I had to ask the guy to slow down. That made him mad, so he slowed to a walk and then his "fist" went all to pieces. Well, I finally got something written down which was duly broadcast with no later repercussions. I soon discovered that a little conversation with the operator at the other end worked wonders. Soon I was able to take the press at a reasonable clip and everybody was reasonably happy. I was on watch the night the news of the armistice ending World War I came in over the wire. I have the key mounted on the operating table here at K6IX which I used that morning to broadcast this news along with the other press.

During the months I spent at KPH I handled my share of "picture bride" traffic. I'll always remember the operator on JTY. Besides being a very fine operator he was the only diplomat amongst the operators on the Tenyo, Shinyo, Korea and Siberia Marus running regularly into San Francisco. He would call just once and let us know he had plenty of traffic, then he would QRX while we cleared all the miscellaneous ships scattered over the Pacific, even relaying stuff we were having trouble copying. But how he could unload those "arrive Thursday" messages when all other traffic had been cleared!

After some twenty months at KPH (including some time after the navy changed the call to NWO) I was transferred to NPG where I worked the NPG-NPM arc circuit handling commercial traffic. Then followed a few months sea duty aboard USS New Mexico and USS New York. I was the "chief" aboard the latter battle wagon. On April 29, 1921 I received my honorable discharge aboard the New York at San Pedro. That ended my career at brass pounding as a means of livelihood. Thereafter I spent eight years in the automotive electrical and radio repair business in Berkeley. This was followed by some thirty-five years in the elevator business, the last twenty of which were either as manager, supervisor or superintendent. The last three years I was supervisor of field education for Haughton Elevator Company, Western Region, from which job I retired at age 68.

Soon after retirement I moved to Yucaipa, California, from where I operate amateur station K6IX, almost exclusively CW. I do have "ancient modulation" gear, but in these days of SSB it doesn't go over so big. Previous to 6QR already mentioned I had a couple of spark coils on the air beginning in about 1910. With the exception of the time from the expiration of 6QR during the war and getting 6AHJ in the early twenties I have had a valid amateur operator and station license continuously. Somewhere along the line I acquired an amateur Class "A" license, and in accordance with FCC regulations in 1952 this became an Amateur Extra Class ticket. A little later under the FCC "grandfather provisions" I acquired the two letter call K6IX.

So this is the story of the young squirt who sneaked in the back door and thereby ultimately became eligible to join the Wireless Pioneers.



## Sea Going Radio Shacks Past & Present

BY BEN RUSSELL

Equipment on merchant ships has changed since the end of WW-2 (1945) and the present. Many of these changes have been brought about by FCC and international rules changes; others reflect increases in communications and electronics technology.

A World War II Liberty ship in coastal service may have had only a single transmitter on board, which served as the main and emergency unit; most did have an H/F rig which worked well.

Modern vessels have SSB and CW capabilities on high frequency bands, separate main and emergency transmitters on medium frequency, and a minimum of two VHF FM transceivers. Present options include radio printers (SITOR) and satellite communications

### Significant changes

Modern ships use alternating current (AC) electrical power distribution systems, which eliminates the need for motor generator sets to provide operating voltages and reduces the number of batteries to a minimum. Fortunately, the days of fighting acoustic noise, QRN, and arcing brushes have passed, and the present-day radio officer can concentrate on copying through normal QRM and QRN. Transmitters are crystal-controlled on the medium frequencies (410-512 KHz) and fully frequency-synthesized on H/F bands (4 - 25 MHz). Modern receivers have accurate frequency readout, permitting the R/O to park a receiver on a coast station, even when its marker transmissions are not being made.

The emphasis on ship design has been to improve hull cargo utilization by moving the superstructure aft, which shortens the shaft alley, etc., but causes some significant antenna problems.

The old medium-frequency antennas, which consisted of L and T configurations with 200 to 300-ft. flat-tops between masts have vanished, with a loss of efficiency. Modern ships are using short wire antennas or top-loaded vertical antennas on 500 KHz, which develop very high voltages and increase the susceptibility of lost antenna current in foggy or heavy spray conditions. Familiar doublets used for receiving have been replaced with 35-ft. vertical whips.

### Modern Radio Rooms

A typical tanker radio room on ships built in 1982 will usually be approximately 13 x 18 feet and contain four racks of equipment, desk, filing cabinet, work bench, storage containers, and a facsimile recorder. The portholes are permanently sealed to keep out fumes, and the room is cooled and heated by a forced air system. During times when the central air conditioner is down for maintenance, the radio shack heats up rapidly.

Excluding satellite equipment, the radio room will have four or five fully synthesized receivers tuning from 10 KHz to 29.9999 MHz - all electronic no magnetic clutches and motor or relays, auto alarm keyer, voice auto alarm keyer, fixed guard receiver for 2182 KHz, battery charger, audio distribution and switching, receiver antenna selection switching, automatic antenna tuner, and normal transmitter antenna switching.

The Liberty ship used knife switches to select between HF- MF - main and emergency antennas, and fixed doublet antenna for the single H/F receiver.

### Operator Quarters

The super tankers (VLCC) usually provide the Radio Officer with his air-conditioned sleeping room, head/shower, and a day room. The smaller ships provide a cabin with bunk, desk, easy chair, head/shower, usually adjacent to the radio room. A bedroom steward makes up the bunk and keeps the quarters neat and clean.





## A SAGA OF THE GREAT LAKES



BY-

ERSKINE H. BURTON

Reminiscing over a relatively short career as W/O in my younger days, some interesting experiences come to mind. This career began in 1928 and ended in 1939 at the outbreak of World War II.

I recall aiding in the rescue of the crew of a Great Lakes cargo vessel ship-wrecked on an island in Lake Superior 100 miles northwest of Sault Ste. Marie. During the season of 1929 I was employed as a W/O and deckhand on the tug "James Whalen" VGZD, based in Port Arthur, Ontario. I had been promised a job on a "laker" by the Canadian Marconi Company, and together with two others we arrived in Port Arthur from our home town of Vancouver, to find Thunder Bay still completely ice-bound, no indication of when shipping would open, and no word of any assignments from the Marconi Company.

There was much activity with the harbor tugs, however, which were busy opening channels in the 40 inches of ice blocking the harbor in preparation for towing the loaded grain boats out to open water. The largest of these tugs, the "James Whalen", and the only tug equipped with wireless, needed an operator, who was required to double as deck-hand at a salary of \$125 per month and all found. Rather than wait around for my assignment to a grain boat at \$75 to \$80 per month, I decided to take the job. Since we were on call 'round the clock, it turned out to be a great opportunity to save money, since I rarely got off the ship, even to go up town. Also, at age 19, everything was exciting, and I was kept so busy I had no time to get into trouble.

One day, toward the end of May, a sudden snowstorm swept over the lake. We were ordered to proceed to Keweenaw Point, on the upper peninsula of Michigan, where a large American cargo ship had gone aground. Its crew had managed to get ashore safely. Our task was to tow the salvage barge and equipment to the scene and to see if it were possible to free the ship from the reef. After two weeks' work preparing the ship for the long tow to Duluth by fitting her with pumps to keep her afloat, we were ready for the attempt to pull her free. With the aid of a second tug brought over from Port Arthur, we began to pull. Slowly, with a shattering sound of steel against rock, and with half a dozen large pumps spewing water in all directions from her deck, the ship began to move.

We had been successful in freeing the Ralph Budd from her cradle on the reef, but now our concern was that of keeping her afloat during the 200-mile tow to the head of the lake. Fortunately, all pumps kept working, we reached Duluth uneventfully, and docked our tow in the twin city of Superior, Wisconsin. All pumps were shut down, allowing the ship to rest on the bottom, only the hold filling with water. The following day we returned to our home port.

Our next contact with the wrecked ship was several months later when we were ordered to proceed to Superior to bring her to Port Arthur, where she was to be dry-docked. The pumps were re-started, and again we had an uneventful tow, followed by putting the ship in drydock. Here she remained until the third week in October, when it was decided to tow her to Collingwood, Ontario, on Georgian Bay, some 500 miles distant, where she was to be repaired.

We set out on the long tow to Georgian Bay around the 23rd of October. A larger, more powerful tug, the "Strathbogie", had been dispatched from Collingwood to take the towline, while our tug was lashed to the port side astern to keep the ship on course. Midway across Lake Superior we received a storm warning, the first of the season. The captain of the Strathbogie decided to head for shelter to wait out the storm. Just in time, we found shelter in a small bay on Michipicotten Island, 100 miles northwest of the Soo. Here we were to remain for a full week, our only neighbors being two fishermen's families living in the harbor. We were comfortable here while the gale raged outside the harbor, but our radio brought the news of tragedy all about. One night I listened as the operator of a car ferry crossing Lake Michigan calmly advised the Chicago Radio - WGO that they were taking water and in need of assistance. WGO asked him to stand by while the station notified the shipping company. A few minutes later WHO called the car ferry repeatedly, getting no reply. We later learned from the newspaper the news that she had disappeared with no survivors.

As the storm began to abate, we learned from a passing ship that they had sighted a cargo vessel, which was high and dry on the rocks on the opposite side of the island from us--some 10 miles away. This ship, the "CHICAGO", was not equipped with wireless gear. We acknowledged the message and advised that we would attempt to reach the wrecked ship. Early the next morning we set out for the scene, but the sea was still too rough and we returned to shelter. However, the same afternoon we were able to reach the scene, heaving to a mile or so off shore due to the reefs. We were greeted by a formidable sight--the ship was perched on the rocks at an angle of about 45 degrees with its bow high and dry and its stern submerged. Close by we saw smoke and thru' the glasses we saw several men moving around on the shore. We lowered a boat with the intent of going in to their assistance, but the captain decided it would only be carried beyond the island and out to sea, due to the wind direction, and the boat was brought back aboard. We then notified the Coast Guard at the Soo, asking them to dispatch a rescue boat to the scene. On arriving back at Batchawana Harbor we learned that two of the ship's crew had walked across the barren island to where we were sheltered and reported the crew were all in good condition. The following morning the Coast Guard arrived and sent in a lifeboat to rescue the crew.



On completing our tow to Georgian Bay, we were ordered to proceed home. On our way back we were diverted to five different ships which had been either wrecked or frozen in the ice in the Straits, with orders to render any possible assistance. Our last assignment on this trip was to pick up the light-keepers at Isle Royal and Passage Island, 40 miles out from Port Arthur. We limped into port on Christmas Eve, 1929, breaking six inches of ice to get thru'. We had been gone just over two months. On Christmas morning I had to be chopped out of my cabin, the door of which had been frozen shut.

Fresh water sailing on Lake Superior, the largest body of fresh water in the world, in November and December, is a hazardous experience. The year 1929 was the most disastrous season for shipping on the Great Lakes since 1913, when many ships were lost with no survivors. More than 200 lives were lost on the lakes during the 1929 season.



Reprinted from The Inland Seas Beacon

Ann Arbor Car Ferry # 4.

BY - GEO. X. M. COLLIER

In all of Frankfort's intimacy with marine affairs, there was probably never another disaster, with no fatalities, that caused so much of a thrill and lasting interest as did the sinking of Ann Arbor car ferry No. 4, on the night of February 14, 1923.

Few people at the time immediately realized the miraculous escape of the crew, though they read the brief news item of the ferry's sinking.

On the 13th, the Ann Arbor car ferry No. 4 sailed out of Frankfort harbor at 8:00 p.m. for Kewanee, Wisconsin. Capt. Fredrickson and his crew of 30 believed that they could get in the lee of the west shore of Lake Michigan before the reported storm struck the lake.

They did not have any intimation of the great velocity of the wind that was traveling across the country, and when it struck them, one hour and forty minutes later, they realized it was a life-sized hurricane.

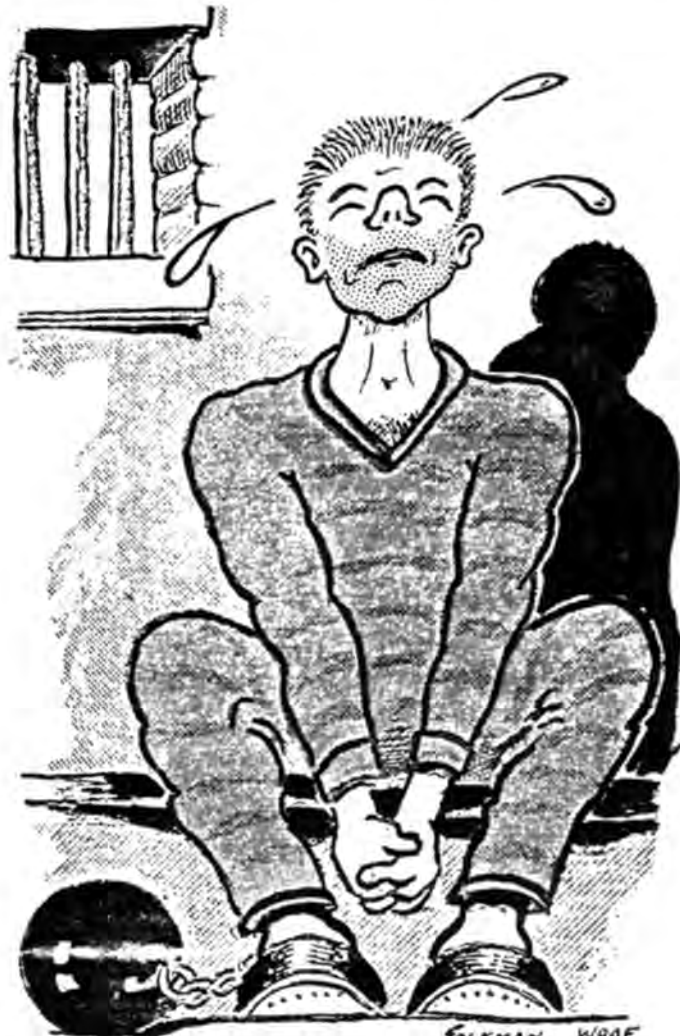
The force of the wind and the heavy seas made it impossible for the boat to hold up before the storm: and with its heavy load of nineteen cars of coal and one car of Buick automobiles, trouble soon began on the car deck, despite the efforts of the entire crew in trying to hold the car fastenings from breaching and letting the cars loose.

Cars began to break loose and run back and forth on the tracks, some rolling over on the decks, bending stanchions and deck beams, and wrecking the inside of the boat in a frightful manner.

The carload of automobiles went overboard, from the stern, with several cars of coal. Other cars of coal hung over the stern of the boat, weighting it down, so it was but a few inches above the water, which soon lashed over the boat's deck and ran down into the engine and fire hold.

The crew on deck, headed by the captain, could not accomplish much in holding the cars, and the engineers, with all pumps working, could not gain on the quantity of water which kept coming down through the deck openings.

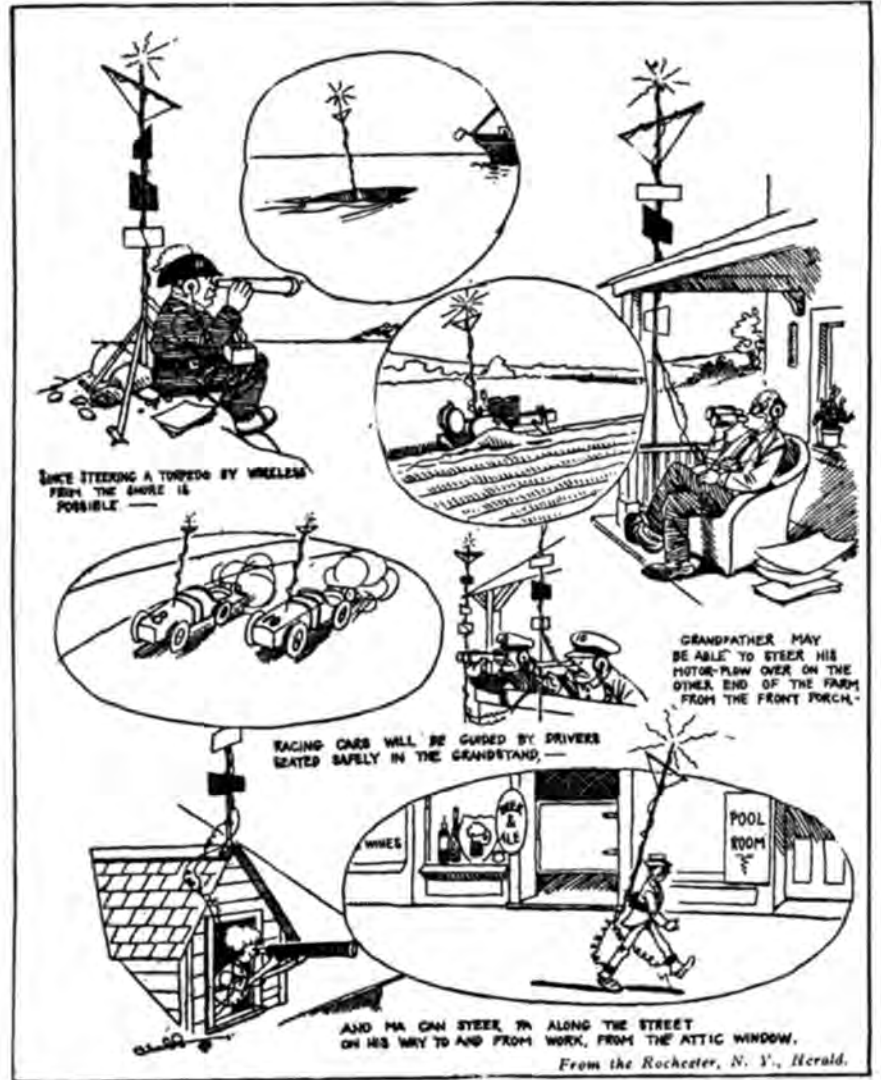
The engineers and the firemen stuck to their stations, while standing in water steadily growing deeper. The captain on deck calmly smoked his pipe and encouraged his crew, while he worked with them trying to secure the rolling cars.



"HOW DID I KNOW MY HAM STATION WAS BUSTIN' UP MARINE TRAFFIC ON 600 METERS."

WHAT MAY BE EXPECTED

A CARTOONIST'S IDEA OF WIRELESS IN DAYS TO COME



The only hope was to keep the boat afloat as long as possible and run a chance of sinking in shallow water, near the shore. There, also, the breakers would be dashing up against the shore icebergs, and the floes of ice were grinding back and forth in the heavy seas. No boat could have lasted long under such conditions.

The snowstorm was so dense the crew could not see any distance over the lake. They had no means of knowing just where they were.

The radio operator got in touch with the shore radio operator at Frankfort, and he tried to direct them toward the harbor. No radio compass device was then in use, but the Frankfort operator managed to give them an idea of that course to steer.

At daybreak of the cold winter morning, when about all hope had gone, the storm quieted down to some extent, and the snow stopped falling, so that when the air cleared a little, the first sight was the harbor light of Frankfort harbor.

The car ferry was headed partly crosswise for the harbor entrance. The boat, being so deep in the water, soon struck bottom.

The propellor shaft and propellor on one side broke off, and the working of the propellor on the opposite side shifted the ferry around straight, so that it ran up alongside the south pier and nearly into a cellar of waves, where it sank.

The firemen and engineers waded through water up to their waists and barely had time to climb to the upper deck before the steamer went down, with water reaching half way up to the upper deck, over the car deck.

Before the boat rested on the bottom, it was dashed against the south pier and nearly rolled over. The crew clung to the top side of the boat, ready to climb onto the ice-covered pier, but the boat righted itself just before it foundered. It lay so close to the pier that the crew had no trouble in getting off on the pier and walking to shore.

The ferry was a mass of ice inside and out for many days, but by the aid of cofferdams and divers, with good wrecking outfits and pumps, the boat was finally raised and taken to the Manitowoc shipyard, where it was repaired and is still in active service.

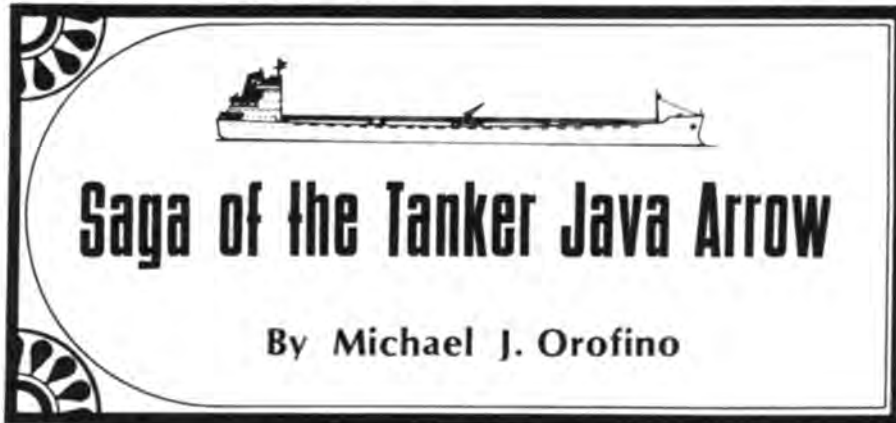
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George writes:

I was a sophomore in high school at the time, and remember this well !

The radio op. on SSAA No. 4 was the late Ferris McKesson, of Sandia, N. M. The ship's radio call was WDO; the shore station was WFK.





## Saga of the Tanker Java Arrow

By Michael J. Orofino



### Story of Sabotage and Torpedoes

I was the radio operator on the S.S. Java Arrow, an oil tanker of the Socony Vacuum Oil Company when it went into the shipyard for extensive armament preparations on March 24, 1942. The radio cabin was protected on the outside by heavy steel plates. Two Browning machine guns were mounted at each end of the bridge. A five-inch gun was mounted at the stern of the ship. A five-man navy crew was assigned to the ship.

We left New York April 25 as the last ship in a convoy. Our lead ship was a corvette, a fast warship used for anti-submarine and convoy duty. Our ship was bound for Curacao. There we were to load and then proceed to a port in the Persian Gulf. Before leaving New York, a cargo of high test gasoline contained in drums was stored in 'tween deck. This deck is located on top of the bunkers (cargo tanks) and beneath the main deck.

About a day out of New York, the Chief Engineer, Mr. Albert Fentress, and the First Engineer, Mr. Andrew Weller came to me and explained about a problem with the signal systems between the bridge and the navy gun crew back aft, at the stern of the ship. The signal system did not work. They were unable to locate the cause of the problem. They asked me if I would help them.

With my test meter I checked the continuity of the wires in the signal system. There was a definite open circuit between the bridge terminals and the terminals at the gunner's position. The wires were encased in a half-inch rubber casing and protected by a metal braided covering. I proceeded to check the cable for possible damage, starting from the bridge, tracing the cable below deck where the drums of gasoline were stored, along the length of the 'tween deck, to the stern of the ship. Here, the cable came up along the frame of a doorway where I noticed a rough area on the painted surface of the cable. I scraped off the paint and removed a soft material imbedded inside the cable. This material looked like putty. After I cleaned out this putty-like substance, it became apparent that the cable wires were cut. It seemed that a drill was used to dig into the cable to cut the wires then packed up with this material and painted over again.

I notified our Captain, Mr. Sigvered J. Hennichen, the Chief Engineer and the navy Chief Petty Officer in charge. I showed them the damaged cable and how it was covered over to be undetected. I immediately repaired the cable and the signal systems between the bridge and the gunner's position back aft were back in operation.



S.S. BROAD ARROW WSCJ



We were in the Florida Straits on May 2, at about 11:45 P.M. when the S.S. Java Arrow was struck by two torpedoes. The first torpedo struck the port after quarter, flooding the engine room and killing our Third Engineer, Mr. Philip Shera. Also our Chief Engineer, whose room was above the engine room was killed. Luckily our Fireman was on deck going forward to call his relief. The Oiler and the Wiper on watch were near the top railing of the engine room and both managed to escape.

The second torpedo struck us seconds later, mid-ship, port side, just below my cabin and sending all of us scrambling to our positions. I ran up to the bridge to pick up a message on our position from the Captain, and ran down to the radio room. My receiver was dead! I could not hear any signals. The transmitter did not show any antenna current. The main antenna was out of service. I tried the auxiliary antenna, and that also did not work. I ran back to the Captain who was now on deck with the Mates directing the lowering of the lifeboats. I explained the antenna problem to him and suggested that I go and try to repair the antenna above the radio room, or string up a wire up there. He said, "We have no time; we must abandon ship immediately." I ran back to the radio room, quickly stretched out a roll of scrap wire and connected it to the transmitter. I quickly sent out the distress signal S.S.S. and our position, hoping that it will be heard. I was trying to listen for any faint reply to my distress call when I was called to abandon ship. The ship was listing port side and sinking fast. I climbed down Jacob's ladder into the lifeboat with the Captain close behind. The crew pulled the lifeboat away from the ship as quickly as possible.

We were in two lifeboats. It was a dark night. We were thankful that the gasoline drums stored 'tween deck did not explode or ignite. Otherwise this story may have been different. Two of the crew in our boat were injured and bleeding. The Chief Mate, Mr. William Duggan who was in our lifeboat fired two rockets. The first rocket was fired directly overhead, and the light from the rocket illuminated our lifeboat like a circular spotlight on a stage. It gave us an eerie and tense feeling sitting in that lifeboat surrounded by a dark ocean. We heard of reports that enemy submarines sometimes surfaced and shelled the ship and lifeboats. The second rocket this time was fired at an angle, away from the lifeboat. About two hours later we were picked up by boats from the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They were a beautiful sight.

The next day we received a report that the Java Arrow was still afloat. Apparently the empty bunkers kept the ship from sinking. The Chief Mate, with several crewmen and myself, went back to the ship on a navy mine sweeper. The Java Arrow was afloat but her deck was under water. We climbed aboard and surveyed the damages. The Chief Mate and I went up to the bridge and noticed the main antenna lead-in wire dangling up high. It broke away from the feed-through insulator to the radio room. The auxiliary antenna was down completely. Apparently the antenna systems on these tankers were vulnerable to snapping apart when the ship was torpedoed. Our sister ship, S.S. China Arrow, had a similar experience. The main antenna snapped and came down after the ship was struck by a torpedo. The Captain, Paul H. Browne, ordered lifeboats to be launched, and he and the radio operator, Kenneth William Maynard, tried to put up a temporary antenna. They quickly abandoned the attempt when the enemy submarine began shelling the stricken vessel. The ship sank about an hour after being struck by the torpedo.

In Fort Lauderdale, two government officials contacted me at the hotel where all of us were staying. I gave them a detailed report on the cut cable to the gunner's position, and explained how it was cleverly camouflaged. We know that all signal systems were checked after installation, and also tested before sailing. Was the cable cut while we were in the shipyard just minutes before sailing? Or was it cut when they were loading the drums of gasoline at the dock before sailing to meet the convoy?

(Continued on Page 29)





# The Electronic Super Bowl Battle of the Century

*In this amusing fantasy, the Editor of De Blauwe Wimpel watches the navigation systems' tournament in Silicon Valley. We do not necessarily agree with the result!*

## SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS INC.

### AT THE TOURNAMENT OF TECHNIQUES

Jan Noordegraaf

*In our modern age, technology means trying to control a part of nature, for which we have all kinds of specialists available, and they develop a specific jargon for their very own selective professional area.*

*The users of technical systems have partly adopted this professional language, but in the end they are more interested in the results of their application.*

*In order not to limit the scope of this essay to pure professional and critical end-users, it seems advisable to specify the most prominent and modern electronic navigation and radiolocation systems.*

*They are listed according to range, accuracy and frequency, and classified with respect to their short- or long-range possibilities.*

*This classification is also meant to be a list of competitors at the tournament of the century.*

*The participants are present under own colours and with own means at their disposal, trying to gain the favour of their end-users: geologists, nautical officers, geodists, oil companies, the military, cartographers, hydrographers and many others. And also you.*



The method used by Philips is rather unconventional. However, it was to be expected. AP Navigator is clearly using the facilities of Lord Decca, who obviously held onto his patents too long, and managed to create quite some resistance with the users.

#### Countdown begins

'On your marks!', the metal voice of the speaker calls out—a symbolic way of putting it. The countdown has begun: target, the year 2000. The tension is as sensible as the heat in Silicon Valley.

In the distance all kinds of people in white coats and overalls are still running around, carrying parabolic antennae, integrated circuits, minuscule chips, hyperboles, asymptotes, drawings and heavy hardware. 'Those technicians,' I think, 'never content, always engaged until the last moment.' The air is vibrating. The pictures of the technicians are unreal and deformed. They are long and tiny, and carry huge heads full of software on top of their swaying bodies.

'Helpers away!', the speaker calls. 'Anchors aweigh!' Next to me, a bulky American with a tin of beer in his hand tries to be funny. My smile is full of tension. 'Vamos!' somebody shouts from the crowd.

A shot echoes over the valley. The direction is uncertain, but the helpers tumble into the dust and the Systems are now moving forward in a cloud of dust. The speaker starts giving his eyewitness account in a high-pitched voice.

At this moment I do not listen to him. The dust clouds stop one seeing what is going on. My thoughts are wandering off to laboratories, schools and universities, the breeding ground of science and techniques. I know very well that highly-skilled technicians, nameless and dedicated, will time after time again emerge enthusiastically out of their trenches of science, only to be shot at by their opponents, and see their brilliant ideas die with an unbelieving smile on their faces. And in between all of them the mortar shells of economy are making havoc, killing friends and enemies.

The American next to me exclaims: 'What a slaughterhouse!' *'Navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse'*, I suddenly think. It came from nowhere. But look, the System has priority. The onlookers only mind the results and the inventors are not important. *'C'est la vie!'*, a man with an alpine cap remarks.

The speaker is almost hysterical now. 'Watch them! Lord Decca and Luke Loran, who got the old Count Marconi out of his saddle in 1940, have to allow with foam on their lips that they are left behind, both in their own class and distance, by AP Navigator and Sam Satellite, closely followed by the heavily panting Bill Omega, who in his own time impatiently trampled down the innocent Decca and his comrade-in-arms Loran, after which those two had already divided the world between themselves, like the Spaniards and the Portuguese in ancient times under the sanction of the Holy Pope of Rome!'

'*Njet pravda*,' a Russian shouts. '*Saljuski* . . . 'Ah, shut up!', the American next to me remarks. 'May the best system win!' One row in front of us a Japanese is laughing but I don't know why.

#### Change in 1970

The big change came when Sam Satellite in or about the year 1970 suddenly emerged over the horizon and started to subdue all kinds of terrestrial radio navigation systems with his heavenly looping-the-loops. And look what he is doing now! He is the fastest and the best and is going to win, I tell you! There, he takes the bend! What style, what performance! Small he is, compact, sure of himself, the disc-shape antennae-eyes beggingly directed to the skies, as if all blessings are coming from that direction after all! But for many earthlings and watchers this Sam is still an outcast with little feeling for real proportions. But what a guy! What power! What technique!

The speaker is in optimum form. I close my eyes for a moment and when I open them again, I focus on a queer old man in uniform, shooting the sun with an antique sextant. 'The ancient mariner', the bowler hat remarks, also seeing the old man. And with typical English humour adds: 'Must be British!'

And in the meantime the reporting of the speaker is scattering around over the heated valley: 'Still Sam Satellite is the number one, ladies and gentlemen, but look what is happening! He is losing speed. Suddenly his performance is down. He stops altogether. What is the matter with him? He seems to have a stroke or something!'

I look over my shoulder, expecting to see the cause of this. In the distance the disc aerial is not moving any more. Instead it remains directed towards the horizon under which the navigation satellite has just disappeared. Sam does not receive signals any more. He has to wait until the next satellite appears again, or just go on to dead reckoning. And that is what he is doing now.

The public is rising. Some of them are furious, some delighted. 'Winning this race is a synthesis between techniques and capital,' the speaker explains.

Class A Short- and medium-range			
System	Range (nm)	Acc. (m)	Freq.
Artemis	10	3-10	9,200-9,270
Decca HiFix	200	20-100	1.7
Cubic Autotape	60	1-5	2,900-3,100
Cubic Argo	200	10	2
Hydrotrack	100	10	2
Mini Ranger	100	2-8	5,550-9,400
Pulse 8	200	50-100	0.1
Syledis	120	1-10	406-450
Trisponder	80	3-10	9,300-9,500
Toran	200	10	2
Class B Long-range			
AP Navigator	200-300	50-300	90-130 KHz
Decca Navigator	200-300	50-300	90-130 KHz
Loran C	200-1,500	300-800	90-110 KHz
Omega	5,000	1,600-3,200	10.2-13.6 KHz
Satellite	world-wide	100-600	150; 400 MHz

And again there is excitement. On the short-range track something unexpected is apparently happening. 'The Big Dutchman is going to win from Lord Decca, I believe,' the speaker announces. 'Of course,' a German remarks, 'A Dutch trick,' the bowler hat states. 'May the best system win!', the valley repeats.

I am still chewing on the echo, when the crowd begins to cheer and the tournament field is suddenly changing into an arena full of sound. Sam Satellite gets the spirit again. Behind me I notice how the disc antenna is veering up from its lowest position, is swaying up and down searchingly and begins to follow a fixed arc across the sky, passing the sun in the zenith and beyond to the other horizon. At the same time Sam Satellite takes the lead without any faltering and is leaving all others far behind. There seems no alternative.

'Look,' the bowler hat says, pointing to the old man with the sextant, which he has thrown upon the ground and is kicking furiously. 'What a game!', the American says.

The crowd sits down again. Strangely enough it does not become dark. At the tournament of techniques the sun apparently does not go down.

I wonder how Silicon Valley will look in the year 2000, and which participants will remain. Maybe I will be a witness again—a fascinating outlook. □

IT IS WARM in Silicon Valley, California, cradle of the most advanced electronic systems in the world. Behind us a couple of parabolic disc aeriels for an American earth station are slowly moving between the horizons, following satellites coming over in their polar orbits.

The gathering around me has followed the repeated warning of the speaker whose voice thundered over the valley after the roll call, and covered their heads, for the sun is a killer. When I look up, I see the blinding light of the sun in a dome of the faintest blue, in which a number of earth satellites, so important for our purpose—radiolocation—are persisting on their predetermined tracks through the thin remnants of the earth's atmosphere.

Observing the crowds behind a pair of dark sunglasses, I see the peoples of the Earth under all kinds of odd headgear—cowboy hats, straw hats, sombreros, a single fez, buttoned handkerchiefs, Arab veils, Indian turbans, ponchos argentinos, Korean fighting caps and—last but not least—some bowler hats.

A truly international gathering has come this long way, each of them on their own motives—national, technical, economic, nautical, geodetical—to be present at this tournament of the technical titans of the age and have already betted heavily on their own favourites. Again the stone-hard voice of the speaker is sounding over the quivering valley: 'That the best system may win!' Roaring applause follows his words, bouncing off the edges and slopes of the Rockies around us.

#### Battle of the century

'Silence, please! You are going to witness the battle of the century!' Suddenly it becomes quiet. The public is standing up in order better to see the participants.

Through my binoculars I peep at the participants. In the battle are Lord Decca with Navigator, Trisponder and Pulse 8; Monsieur Sercel from Nantes with Toran and Syledis; a Dutchman in wooden shoes with Artemis; and a choice of Americans, such as Tom Motorola with Mini-ranger, Dan Cubic with Argo and Autotape, and Hydro Track, ranging to 300 miles. But the big match for world hegemony will take place between Bill Omega, Luke Loran and Sam Satellite, all three of them impressively sponsored by the American Government.

It is well known that the ancient Count Marconi, the Anglo-Italian, met little competition with his first and only Goniometer, and dominated the race-track for several decennia, although there was equal competition from France and Germany. In 1940, however, Lord Nelson Decca and Big Luke Loran entered the arena, although the one-track-minded European Carlo di Consol tried to hold out against all odds. But in the meantime all drop-outs had disappeared, so that a field of the strongest remained.

'I am wondering what the Russians and Japanese are going to do,' remarks somebody behind me. He is right. The obvious presence of the silent Soviets and the smiling Japanese with their secret, anonymous systems, has also caught my attention. But personally I am more interested in the first appearance of the Dutchman Fritz Philips with the Danish crack AP Navigator. The chuckling crowd seems to be highly interested, and a lot of exclamations are heard.

There has always been intense rivalry, not only among nations but entities within nations to have their "mode" of communications adopted as the 'standard' throughout the world. Society member, JAN NOORDEGRAAF 3442-V is co-editor on three European maritime and electronic magazines, has watched trends for many years and is eminently qualified to report on the vagaries in the communications and maritimes fields. He watches the "Battle of the Titans" from his perch as Editor/Author and chronicles in lucid detail the 'chess-game' for high-stakes always in progress as his fantasy develops on this Page.

It is not as fast-acting as the 'one-way'bout between Christians and Lions at the Colliseum in the days of Caesar and ancient Rome, or for that matter Super-Bowl XIX when played out in January. However, the long-term effect will probably be greater to more people. W.A.B.



## Saving Lives Around The World

## MEET "EPIRB"

## Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon

PAUL L. SCHMIDT 1413-V

The Navy, in its wisdom, long ago eliminated code requirements for its radiomen. Now they let their fingers do the talking on a computer, or use voice. This is a new day, and we should learn to make our way in it. There is now a new type of equipment for locating and finding distress vehicles such as downed aircraft of all kinds, ships in distress, even hikers in the wilds (if they carry the unit with them).

EPIRB is the name of the device. The name means "Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon". NASA is the parent agency responsible and responsive to distress calls from EPIRB's anywhere in the world. EPIRB's are found on most large aircraft and many smaller ones. They are aboard all seagoing ships on which a radiotelegraph station is required, and on many other craft: yachts, tugs, fishing boats, wherever people put to sea, EPIRB's are carried.

For ships, the EPIRB is activated when it finds itself in water. If the vessel containing the EPIRB sinks, the little device floats, hopefully somewhere near the wreck, and begins transmitting a continuous signal on 121.5 and/or 243 MHz from its tiny antenna, radiating its milliwatts of RF.

Now at least one orbiting satellite (and there will be more) acts as a repeater, relaying the EPIRB's uncoded cry for help. From the doppler frequency shift as the satellite approaches the EPIRB and then recedes from it, the EPIRB's position can be determined quite accurately in one or two orbit passes. More than a hundred rescues have been made using EPIRB's thus far. It is planned to begin a second generation of EPIRB's, each containing an identity code which will be continuously transmitted upon activation.

The EPIRB at present can say to the world only, "HERE I AM. I HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED. HELP!" A satellite relays this information to NASA's listening posts. Whereas, a ship or aircraft in distress, depending upon available time, gives the distress call (SOS or MAYDAY) its position, name, nature of the trouble, and the help required. If it's a ship, an alarm signal is also sent which rings bells on nearby vessels calling off-watch operators to 500 KHZ and 2182 KHZ to listen and, if possible, give aid.

## SINKING OF THE SS. JAVA ARROW - OROFINO

(Continued from Page 26)

Reflecting back during the period from December 7, 1941, to most of 1942, our oil tankers plying coastwise were openly vulnerable to enemy submarine attacks. During our trips coastwise, we passed many abandoned tankers, torpedoed and still floating. We saw the mast tops of sunken vessels that were dangerous to navigation. Our auto alarm was going off constantly, especially from ships near Cape Hatteras, coming north and following the Gulf Stream. The enemy submarines were there waiting with minimal risk of being attacked by our military. On one particular stormy night, I received three distress calls, less than one hour apart, from ships near Cape Hatteras. I alerted the Captain each time I received the distress call. The Java Arrow was about two days out of New York and going south to Texas. Our Captain immediately changed the ship's course to pass further east of Cape Hatteras than normally. We were to pass that area the following day. We arrived safely in Texas and again back safely to New York.

Socony Vacuum Oil Company lost many tankers during this period. My last two ships, the S.S. India Arrow (I left her in August, 1941) was torpedoed January, 1942. She caught fire and many of the officers and crew were killed. The S.S. Rochester (I left her in November, 1941) was torpedoed in February, 1942.

From my observation, the officers and crew of the S.S. Java Arrow conducted themselves rather well during the abandoning of the ship. However, sometimes in a moment of panic, you do notice some unusual behavior. When our ship was torpedoed, many of our crew were coming from the fo'castle and running towards the lifeboats. One seaman in particular was noticed. He was barefoot, wearing only shorts, and trying to get into a lifeboat holding a neck-tie.

My business is Merchant Marine Radio. It is my good fortune that I have never been required to send an auto alarm signal, a Mayday nor SOS. But Maritime accidents happen in spite of the best precautions. American crews as a rule are far more watchful for danger, and are more trained and drilled in the practice of safe procedures than those of some other countries.

It bears stating here and now that the lifeboat radio put on board merchant vessels of the U.S. fleet, leaves more than just something to be desired. The radio was designed before or during WW2, and was very probably built at that time. It is a hand-cranked device, using vacuum tubes. It puts out at very best, 5 watts of RF from a 6AQ5 output amplifier on 500 KHZ or 8.364 MHZ. It requires 1-minute of cranking just to warm up the filaments.

After the ship is sunk and the EPIRB floats away, and the lifeboat is launched, we are left with this thing? Sad but true, YES!

Now is the time to gear up for a sparkling new generation of survival craft radio, one that will give the crew a fighting chance to call for help from the stormy seas. This is my contribution:

## U.S. MERCHANT MARINE SURVIVAL CRAFT TWO-WAY RADIO

This May Be Used As A Specification.

This concept sees maximum effectiveness incorporating modern light weight solid-state technology.

1. DESIGN. Careful, thoughtful planning of the product is called for, optimizing weight, space and energy, suggesting the use of aircraft materials in cabinet and panels, and 400-HZ motors and generators where moving parts are required. The total weight, including antenna, interconnecting cables, hand-cranked battery charger, battery and transmitter-receiver unit should not exceed 150 pounds.

2. REQUIREMENTS. The survival craft transmitter-receiver unit should be international orange in color. The exterior should be constructed with radiused corners and edges. The unit density should be such that it will float in salt water. It should further, withstand a free fall of 50 feet into the water without damage.

Transmitter output should be a minimum of 25 watts on any mode or frequency. Modes of operation shall be simplex MF CW, HF, CW and single sideband (upper sideband only), and VHF FM. The transmitter-receiver unit shall be powered by either a hand-cranked generator or by a 12 volt lead-acid or nicad battery, splash-proof or gel cell type. Both battery and generator will be permanently installed in the survival craft, the battery remaining on trickle charge from the ship's mains, and equipped with automatic line disconnect on lowering of survival craft.

A state-of-the-art light-weight MF/HF vertical antenna will also remain stowed permanently aboard the survival craft. It shall be a minimum of 30 feet in length, and will plug into the transmitter-receiver unit through a water-tight connector and a cable of fixed length. The antenna will be pre-tuned by means of antenna configuration and minimal sized inductors and capacitors within the transmitter-receiver unit. Exterior insulation such as fiberglass tubing or shell shall cover the lower approximately 12 feet of the antenna to protect personnel. A strong approximately 12-foot pole of insulated material shall be arranged for positive action in raising and lowering the antenna. A type of collar around the 12-foot level of the antenna is suggested for attaching nylon lines down to the gun-



Quite remarkable picture of the White Star Fleet from a painting by Victor H. Laughlin. The S.S. Republic is identified by an arrow near center. The Republic of course was saved by "Wireless" when Operator Jack Binns was able to summon aid by this new method of communication. The picture was published in 1909 in a book titled "Operators Wireless & Telephone Handbook" It is from the collection of Member, Laird M. Wise. Caption of photograph read "A Modern Merchant Fleet Equipped with Marconi Wireless Telegraph."



## "EPIRB" - SCHMIDT

wales or sides of the survival craft for a semi-permanent installation. A socket for the base of the antenna shall be provided on one of the survival craft seats.

Transmitter-receiver controls shall be human engineered for optimum access. They should be as simple as possible and clearly marked. Low current drain pilot lamps shall provide illumination for night time operation.

The placement of the telegraph key should enhance the comfort and clean sending of the operator. A side tone shall be provided each time the key contacts are closed. Creativity is suggested in design of the telephone handset. It may or may not be fitted with phones for both ears, but a type of headband is necessary that both hands may be free while operating the equipment. A secure, recessed housing for the handset inside the transmitter-receiver cabinet is required. The use of voice operated relay for transmitter control is not recommended because of the high ambient noise levels aboard survival craft. A water-proof loudspeaker with on-off switch shall be provided inside the cabinet.

A separate VHF antenna shall be provided, or it may be incorporated with or installed on the MF/HF antenna. Height above water of a VHF antenna extends the useful range dramatically.

Frequency and mode switching of the transmitter-receiver unit shall be accomplished by front panel controls. These may be arranged to suit the designer, provided the concept of human engineering is adhered to, for ease in operation. Controls shall be: 1. FREQUENCY 2. MODE 3. ANTENNA MATCHING (tune slightly for maximum indicated output) 4. RECEIVER VOLUME 5. RECEIVER INCREMENTAL TUNING (for SSB and CW) 6. SQUELCH (for VHF FM) 7. POWER ON-OFF 8. PUSH-TO-TALK 9. CW-PHONE.

THE FREQUENCIES AND MODES OF OPERATION TO BE PROVIDED ARE:

- A. CW 500 and 512 KHZ and automatic keying of SOS and Auto Alarm Signal for homing of rescue vessels and planes.
- B. CW on the following frequencies: 4181, 4183/6271.5, 6274.5/12543, 12549/22228, 22238.
- C. USB on the following frequencies: 2182/4143.6/6218.6/12429.2/22124.
- D. CW and SSB on the following frequencies: 7255/14313/21390.
- E. FM on the following channels:
  - CH-1 156.050 Intership
  - CH-6 156.300 Intership search & rescue, USCG ships & planes.

- CH-15 156.750 EPIRB and Shore to Ship.
- CH-16 156.800 Calling, EPIRB, Intership, Shore to Ship.
- CH-17 156.850 Intership and Shore to Ship
- CH-22 157.000 USCG units
- CH-71 156.575 Intership and Shore to Ship.

The unit must be rugged enough to withstand testing on a weekly basis, which is required of all of a ship's survival equipment.

It is recommended that a 12-volt heavy duty search light be maintained with the elements of the survival craft radio aboard the survival craft, the lamp to be operable from either the battery or the charger unit, and capable of being keyed for blinker service.



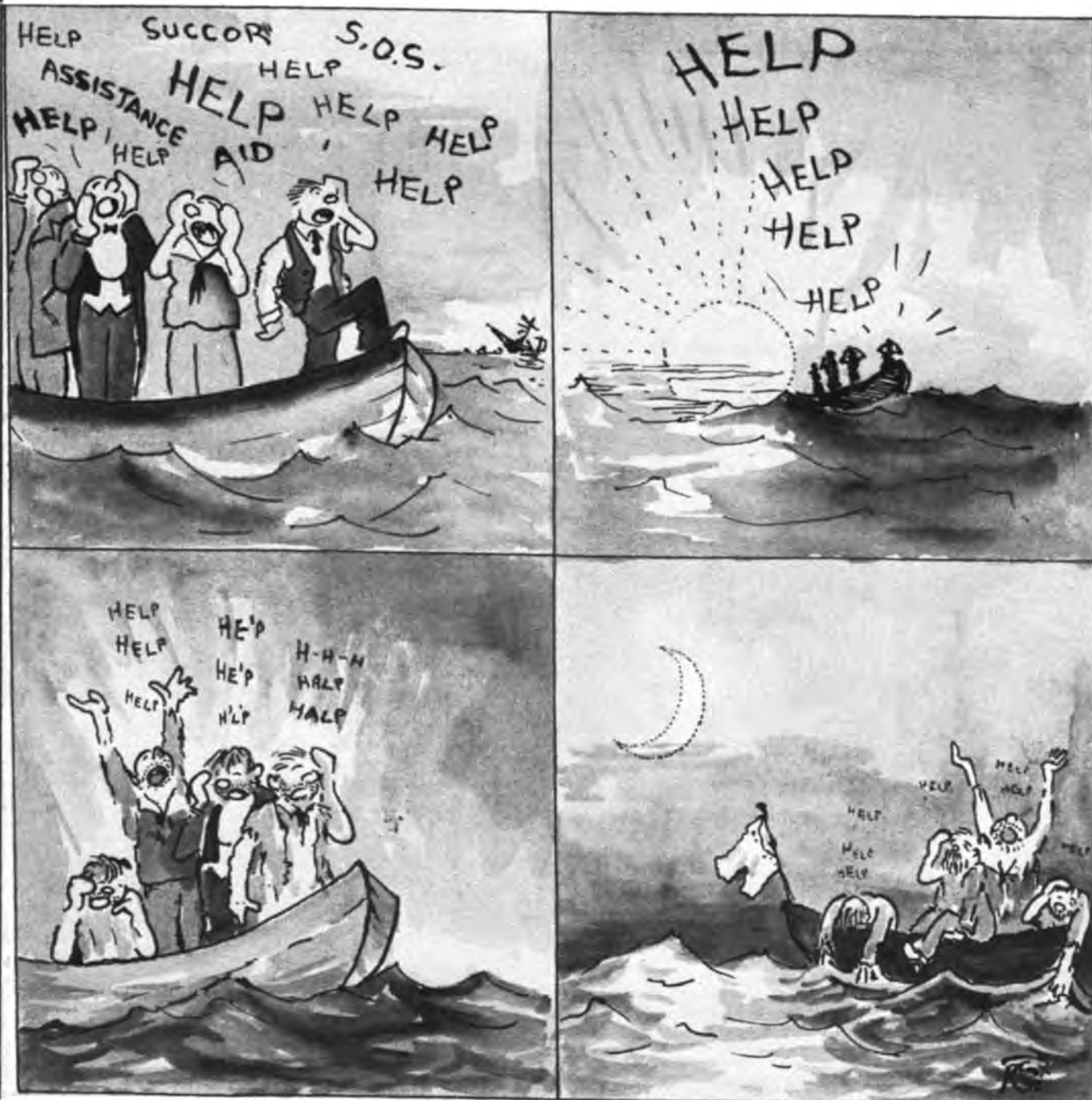
### WE CALLED HIM "RADIO REX"

Gilson Vander Veer Willets - 22-SR. SGP became a silent key Jan. 7 1976. Radio Rex started VWOA in 1925. Prior to his passing he was the Society's First Historian and one of its Directors. Here we see him comparing the new against the old.

===== 30 =====

## "BW" (Before Wireless) Many Perished on a Lonely Ocean

## Historical Drawing



The four panels at the left depict the fate of shipwrecked passengers and crew before the days of wireless when survival depended upon the odds heavily stacked in the favor of fate that they would be seen or saved by some passing ship.

This was the work of an amateur known as "Radio Rex", who just happened to be a Charter Member of the Society [ Senior Spark-Gap Pioneer #22]. Rex lived some 30-miles from Santa Rosa on the Russian River in a beautiful rustic sylvan retreat where a did some writing, sketching and made recordings. He also enjoyed his extensive stamp-collection.

One of the life-long friends of Gilson V.M. Willets [ Radio Rex ] was Dr. Lee deForest and wife Maria who visited frequently -- to get away from it all.

Rex gave this drawing to the Society on the occasion of one trip your Editor made to his home in Villa-Grande in 1972. Rex said that the idea for the drawing came from a suggestion made by Dr. Lee de Forest. It therefore perhaps has a small bit of historical significance coming from the mind of one of the world's great inventors.

Rex's first ship was in 1913 on the SS EL ORIENTE/KKV - thereafter many ships and stations. He was a columnist for Scripps-Howard and retired in 1948 due poor health.





## QUE PASO en PUERTO RICO

By CWO C. R. HARWOOD USCG

**C**oast Guard Radio Station "NMR" is located on La Puntilla in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico on a spit of land just beneath the four centuries-old city wall. Its purpose has varied little from the beginning as both a voice of command for the Coast Guard Commander Greater Antilles Section and as the distress and assistance station for the Caribbean Sea. The Radio Station is manned continuously with 20 radio operators under the direction of a Communications Warrant Officer.

When the Coast Guard and the lighthouse service were amalgamated in 1939 it became necessary to establish a District Primary Radio Station in Puerto Rico. A T-14 (MF) and a T-17 (HF) DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. transmitter were furnished and two operating positions were installed utilizing CGR-32-2 (RCA 60T) and R-100 Federal T&T receivers. The new station was first located in a small room in the Administration Building on the CG Base.

At the outbreak of World War II, the station was expanded and moved next door to Building 2 where it remained until Dec. 1971. In addition, modern TAJ (MF), Collins' TCC-4 and TDH (HF-all modes) transmitters replaced the original equipment and by 1950 the CGR 32-2s were replaced by Collins 51J4s and National HROs.

It was during this period after the war that weather observations became important for trans-oceanic air travel and NMR was tasked with collecting the METEO messages from merchant vessels transmitting the Caribbean and Central Atlantic. Regular observations were also relayed from Coastal stations Curacao/PJC, St. Maarten/PJD, St. Eustatius/PJE, North Post/VYL, La Guaira/YVG and Fort de France/FFP on working freqs of 466 and 128 kcs. It was also during this time that NMR had a good professional relationship with SWP member 'Dick' Schell, 1055-P and his busy Coastal station "WPR" in Guanica, P.R.

Various proposals were made to move NMR out of downtown San Juan to a 'quieter' location and possibly consolidate it with the U.S. Navy but these were

turned down first by the Vice CNO in 1944 and alternately by Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington and the 7th Coast Guard District Office in Miami about every 10 years thereafter until the present. Eventually a compromise was reached wherein the Navy would furnish certain transmitters to be removed back to San Juan. This worked out for much better maritime communications as the post war years brought a stepped-up exchange of traffic with the fixed and mobile stations throughout the area.

When the AMVER (Automated Mutual-assistance Vessel Rescue) Program began in 1958, Radio San Juan was a 'Charter Member' among the network of shore stations accepting movement reports and exchanging mutual assistance traffic with the maritime community. The station enjoys good reception on the higher frequencies and can protect delivery of AMVER traffic in the Caribbean, Eastern Atlantic south of Gibraltar and the South Atlantic Oceans with some recent successes in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.

On January, 1972, two important changes took place in the operations of NMR; first it was moved into its new 'home' in Building 3 with five modern positions in individual sound-proof rooms equipped with the latest Collins 651S receivers and second, the AMVER working frequencies on 8 and 12 MHz were shifted to 8471 and 12700 KHz respectively and 16 MHz guard was added with the answering frequency of 17002.4 KHz. Other equipment was greatly improved too with the dedication of eight 10 KW transmitters located at the Navy Transmitting Facility in Isabela on the northwest coast of Puerto Rico. These are used on the 500/466 KHz band and the AMVER high freqs. In addition, the voice 2 MHz frequencies of 2182 and 2670 KHz have been included to better serve the public on voice (AM) for AMVER and distress traffic. More recently the VHF-FM program has gotten underway and continuous guard on Channel 16 (156.8 MHz) is maintained for distress and calling. Generally the range should be no less than 20 miles offshore of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Antennas are located atop 3 mountain peaks in P. R. and one on St. Thomas.

Radio San Juan has grown proportionally with the maritime trade in the Caribbean and has boosted its services threefold with the advent of the AMVER Program. Recent statistics show NMR handling more 'CW' message traffic than any other Coast Guard station in the world; making it, in the author's opinion, a true haven for "brass pounders."

===== 30 =====



U.S. COAST GUARD BASE, SAN JUAN, P.R. CIRCA 1970 [ C.R. HARWOOD ]



# The Mississippi River Towboats



BY GEORGE D. BROWN 1252 SGP

The Great Lakes shipping season started out as normal in the spring of 1927, but after several trips to the upper lakes, the American Steamship Company laid up nearly their entire fleet at Buffalo, New York.

This would have been my third year as radio operator aboard the steamer S.M. CLEMENT, KFBX, a 500-ft bulk cargo carrier, using a 1/2 KW spark transmitter.

Because of my record, I had been given the job as ship keeper on this vessel at Buffalo. It was a very lonesome job, and when I read of a group who were trying to revive trade on the Upper Mississippi River and who were building several steam boats that were to be equipped with radio, I wrote for a job.

These boats were being built by a banker named C.C. Webber and others for trade on the upper river.

The Inland waterways was already operating a fleet on the lower river that had proved successful, but they had the water to build deeper draft boats. These upper river boats could operate on a heavy dew.

A telegram came back saying to report at once aboard the steamer C.C. Webber, WOBM, at Dubuque, Iowa.

I was a bit apprehensive as to what kind of vessel might be used on the Upper Mississippi.

It turned out to be a newly-built, typical steam-driven stern wheeler, 130 feet in length, 319 gross tons, with a fine radio room and the latest equipment.

After some delay, we left Dubuque for Minneapolis for the trial run. Our traffic at first was sent on 1,100 meters to WZS, a 2-KW arc transmitter at Ft. Snelling. Later, the company built a special building to house the 2-KW CW transmitter and a place for its operator to live.

Eventually, the company built four identical steamboats: the Webber, the Thorpe, the Weeks, and the General Ashburn.

This was a pioneer attempt that proved successful. Small as they were, these boats carried a crew of about 20. The food was very good, and the pay better than average.

Although called towboats, Mississippi River towboats do not tow barges, but rather push them in the same manner as they used to push "showboats", or rafts of logs.

When the Webber was laid up at Dubuque in the winter of 1927, I was transferred to the steamer General Ashburn for a test of these small vessels on the lower river.

Once while down-bound in December pushing several barges, we became icebound and had radio for help from the steamer Thorpe.

While up-bound out of New Orleans in March of 1928, the Chief Engineer wanted to make a good showing, and eventually tampered with the safety valve, trying to beat "the record of the Robert E. Lee."



The U. S. Army towboat is not just an experimental vessel. Masters, pilots and engineers have praised her service between Cincinnati and Pittsburgh.

We had an explosion that blew off the cylinder of the port engine. It was late at night, and in my room over the engine room, it sounded like the end of the world—except that the roar didn't stop.

At first, I opened the door to the stairway leading down to the engine room, but quickly closed it again as the steam poured out.

Next, I went to the pilot house, where I found that we were drifting down the river in the path of other vessels—a very dangerous situation.

It was of no use to send out a call for help, since operators were all asleep, including those on oil tankers and other ocean vessels that used the lower river.

In short time, the engineers succeeded in shutting off the escaping steam.

We had drifted with the river for some time, when there appeared the lights of another up-bound river boat. In the darkness, we could make out the name, it was the steamer VICKSBURG, KDSC.

As it passed, our pilot shouted, "Wake up your radio operator!" I then ran down to the radio room with a message asking for help. The Vicksburg responded promptly.

She dropped her tow, raced down the river after us, lashed us alongside, then proceeded to take us up river along with the rest of her tow—SOS, Mississippi River style!

We used to carry guns, and target-practice on snags and other objects along the shore. At other times, we built kites and flew them while shoving tows. I never did use wire for the kites and tie it to the antenna, although I was tempted to...

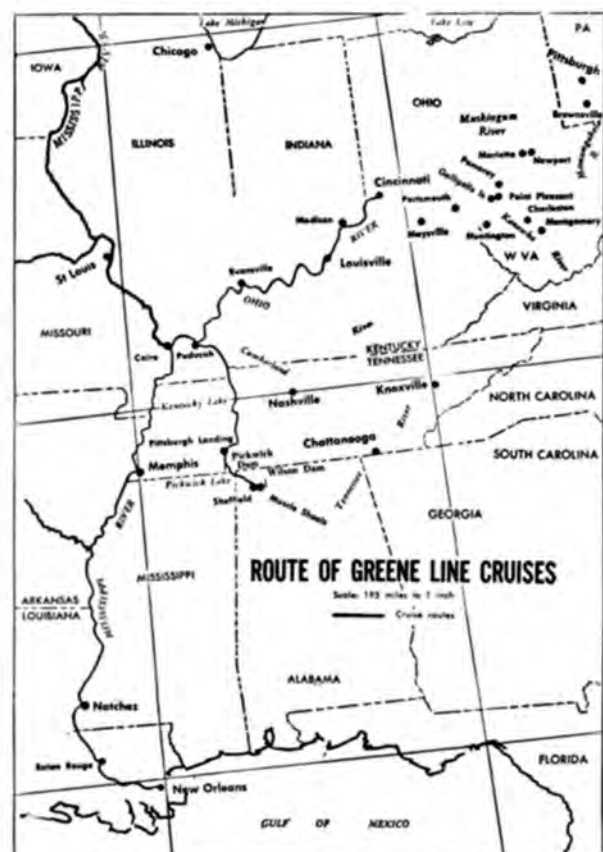
Things have changed since 1927. The Army has built many dams, and there is more traffic on the rivers today than on the lakes and oceans combined, in U.S. vessels.

The upper river vessels later were turned over to the MISSISSIPPI-WARRIOR Service (Inland Waterways) operated by the U.S. Army. A General Ashburn was in charge.

Then, it was radio telegraph, but today it's radio telephone that keeps the vessels in touch with the office and each other.

A recent book, Towboating on the Mississippi, by William J. Petersen, has an account of a trip he made on the Steamer C. C. Webber on August 5 - 8, 1928, from Dubuque to Minneapolis, at the time the writer was operator. It is a fine book, with many illustrations (ed, note: and it mentions George in there, too!).

73's George.



## STEAMER DELTA QUEEN







# Life on the Ocean Wave

By Bill Deacon VE3BDO

The second great thrill for me after receiving my first ship assignment was to receive my first deep-sea assignment. For some, of course, the two birds were killed with the same stone; but in my case, my first deep sea assignment was my third ship.

I received a phone call from the Superintendent of the Canadian Marconi Co. five days after my eighteenth birthday, asking me in a casual tone (knowing very well what my reaction would be) if I felt I would like to join the SS Chief Capilano for a voyage to Shanghai departing the next day. I'm sure he was smiling at the other end of the phone at the excited and rapid affirmative response he received. No drug addict could experience the euphoric and elated state in which I existed for the next 24 hours. I was going to the mysterious Orient! I was going to that city so famed for its dens of iniquity! I was going to cross the great, wide Pacific Ocean! I was going on the great adventure! What more could an 18 year-old ask for?

The Chief Capilano was, at that time, the largest freighter afloat. It was owned by Melville Dollar at Vancouver, son of a very famous shipping magnate in the U.S., Robert Dollar, who, after World War 1 developed a fleet of ships into a round-the-world service that later became the President Line. Its flagship was the SS Robert Dollar, and this now was named the Chief Capilano. It was a 4-master, which was out of the ordinary — most vessels (apart from sail) being two-masters.



This ship had been built in Germany, and was given to the U.S. as part of war reparations after WW1.

On the voyage which was about to commence, it carried what was, at that time, the largest load of grain ever shipped from Canada — 449,000 bushels. This was to be discharged at Shanghai, following which we were to proceed to Vladivostok to deliver the ship to the Russians, who had agreed to buy it from the Melville Dollar Co.

On January 6th, 1931, SS Chief Capilano, gross tonnage 10,893, displacement tonnage 27,000, cast off her lines from the pier at Vancouver, manoeuvred in the harbour to point her bow for the First Narrows (now called the Lions' Gate), and set off on voyage #13 Westbound to Shanghai. The Wireless room was efficiently manned by Chief Operator A.S. (Art) Hudson and Junior Operator William (Bill) Deacon. Japanese marine law required that a ship of our tonnage provide 24-hour radio coverage. The way to do this, it seemed, notwithstanding Board of Trade regulations that provided for 4 hours on, 8 hours off per officer where 24-hour coverage was required, was to have two operators work 6 hours on, 6 off. Keeping in mind that one is not able to sleep a full 6 hours in between watches, you can imagine what a drag it was to sleep in two 4-hour (more or less) snatches.

The equipment was a 1½ KW quenched gap transmitter — the most efficient of spark rigs. The receiver was a regenerative job with honeycomb wound coils for plate, grid and antenna circuits. The coils plugged in to each of three sockets on the front of the receiver, the two outer sockets being moveable through a horizontal arc. Regeneration was controlled by swinging the grid coil nearer to or farther away from the plate coil. In other words variable coupling in its most elementary form. Likewise, coupling to the antenna was accomplished by the same technique. Through the use of plug-in coils, the receiver could cover from about 1.5 mhz to practically DC.

The receiver operated on dry batteries — A batteries for the filaments and a B battery for the plates. This, of course, covered emergency requirements in addition to normal service. One thing to be said for battery operation was that it eliminated the noise and drift that sometimes was experienced in using the ship's "mains".

Anyway, we are now heading through the Straits of Georgia towards Race Rock at the southern tip of Vancouver Island, where we drop off the pilot and proceed onward up the Straits of Juan de Fuca to meet the broad Pacific just off Cape Flattery.

As we sailed up the Straits, we found ourselves facing into a pretty good gale, and the ship began to pitch. This was most disconcerting to me, as my coasting trips thus far had been in relatively calm and sheltered waters. Now the deck was heaving up, down and around in a slow, deliberate motion. With each heave a wave of nausea surged through my miserable frame, and there was a tingling sensation around the hinge of the jaw-bone. Slowly, my enthusiasm for deep-sea sailing was waning, and as we entered the Pacific into a moderate gale, with the ship pitching about with no regard for my physical sensitivities, my desire for sailing disappeared entirely, along with part of my last meal. I fervently wished I could just ask the skipper if he wouldn't mind returning and picking up some other Junior Operator with a more rugged constitution. I was certain I would be totally inoperative for the balance of this voyage. No greater misery has been endured than that of trying to conduct watch keeping in a small, stuffy cabin while one's entire being is in revolt, at being forced to endure the slings and arrows of an angry North Pacific that has been disturbed by the gales indigentous to that area.

I existed on tea and half slice of toast for about 3 days, following which my frame decided that this stubborn rebellion was achieving nothing but further discomfort. Now my body decided that this sensation of whooping around in big seas had some degree of exhilaration, and it became a pleasure to stand on the lower bridge and feel the deck rising and falling like a high speed elevator under one's feet. It also was a marvel to watch those massive seas moving in on the bow like liquid mountains. It always seemed incredible when in a trough to look up at the crest of an oncoming wave so unbelievably high above one, so that it seemed impossible that the ship would not be totally swamped by the massive brute. The pitch of the ship and the wave-tops frequently got out of synch, at which time the bow would come down just as the wave-top was arriving. There would be a mighty flood of water over the forecabin, together with a great tremor throughout the hull that left the ship literally quivering for a few seconds. This is the kind of thing that springs rivets on a poorly constructed hull.

Ready for shore in Shanghai harbour



Bill Deacon, VE3 BDO

We now were headed on a great circle course for the Tsugaru Straits that separate the Island of Honshu from the Island of Hokkaido. From there, we would proceed down through the Sea of Japan, past Korea, to Shanghai. The approximate distance from Vancouver to the Tsugaru Straits is of the order of 4000 miles. Our course took us up just skirting the southern fringe of the Aleutian Islands.

Watch keeping was very routine. Our own traffic was very light, discounting the press and weather reports we copied. The press was not formal traffic, and we copied it for the benefit of our crew of the 15 Caucasians (officers and engineers) on board. The majority of the crew was Chinese. Incidentally, this was a Hong Kong registered vessel; and its call sign was VPBL. We usually picked up noon position reports from vessels in the North Pacific for the information of the Bridge. Not only was it handy to know who may be on approximately the same route, but it was useful to receive the reports on winds and seas. If a ship were to be transmitting on CW in a heavy sea, one could hear the variation in frequency as the antenna/ground capacity varied with the rolling of the vessel.

Gale force winds continued throughout all but the last part of the crossing. The weather reached whole-gale conditions off the Aleutians, and we started to develop cracks in the sheer strakes. There was great concern on the part of the Captain, Chief Officer and Chief Engineer over the risk of water entering into the holds and causing the grain to swell. That would have created a real crisis. In any case, the storm became so severe, and the risk of enlarging the cracks in the sheer strakes became of such great concern that we were hove to for over 24 hours. The ship was pitching so heavily that the screws were coming out of the water as the stern rose. Consequently, it was necessary for the engineer on watch to constantly ride the throttles of the two engines, backing off steam when the revs began to rise, and, of course, increasing throttle when

the screws were where they were supposed to be. At the same time, we in the radio room had to stow the chair under the desk and stand throughout the watch braced against the bulkheads. Sleep was very difficult, since we had to lie on our stomach with elbows braced against bulkhead and bunk-side to keep from being rolled out of the bunk.

One morning, just before breakfast (I had just come off watch at 6 a.m.) I was sitting in the small "library" which was located immediately over the galley. In one heavy lurch of the ship, I heard a crash, followed by some frenzied utterances from the galley crew. I went down to the galley to see that our ½ case of eggs that was sitting on a table preparatory to cooking breakfast had fallen over; and the galley deck was a gooey mess of egg yolks and whites. All of the eggs were destroyed. Breakfast from then on was fried herring!! Perhaps I should have mentioned earlier that the Company was in dire financial straits, and we had nothing lavish for our menus; and just enough food to get us to Shanghai.

(Continued on Page 33)







"SHANGHAI DOLLS"

To add to the Captain's concerns, a Chinese fireman died from 3rd degree syphilis. We wanted to bury him at sea, but the crew would have none of that, since the dead man's spirit could not get back through the water to China. Finally, the carpenter was allowed to put together a pine box; and this was placed on the poop deck for later disposition. Later on, we radioed ahead to our Shanghai agents to have a junk meet us in the Yangtze River before we got to quarantine so that the coffin could be off-loaded before we cleared Quarantine inspection. In this way, all the fuss of clearing up the death to the satisfaction of the bureaucrats could be bypassed.

Finally, on a cold January morning (temperature 25°F), the coast of Japan appeared on the horizon. It was a bright crisp clear day, and as we entered the Tsugaru Straits I was really taken with the beauty of that country. With a host of tiny mountains, it was like looking at the Rockies through the wrong end of a telescope. As we got closer to shore, we could see here and there on the hills one of those shrine entrances painted in bright red. You know the one that looks like a goal post with the cross bar extending beyond the uprights. These were on the Island of Hokkaido, where most of those big Sumo wrestlers come from. I understand that the northern Japanese are substantially bigger than their southern compatriots.

The rest of the voyage to the Yangtze River was routine, but as we neared the quarantine station at Woosung, the fun (?) began.

We met the junk we had requested, and the task of unloading the coffin started. Of course, we had to slow down to nearly a full stop, which made it very difficult to steer the ship. Coordination (?) of the transfer was handled by our chief bos'n (a Chinese) and the captain of the junk. The Chinese are very independent people, and they much prefer to do things in their own way rather than be directed by some other ignoramus. This was the situation here. The bos'n and the captain couldn't agree on the procedures, and while all this hassling was going on, we were still sort of drifting slowly along and getting closer to the shore line. Finally, we ran aground on a sand bar, at which point the problem became very quickly settled and the junk moved off with its load. Meantime, we are very firmly aground, and our engines are not able to free us.

We radioed our Shanghai agents to send a tug down SAP, and one showed up an hour or so later. The tow line was taken aboard, and the tug let out about 1500 feet of cable before it started to take a pull. This put it right across the channel by which ships entered and left the

Whangpoo River, on which Shanghai is situated. It is appropriate to note at this point that Shanghai in those days was the second busiest port in the world. Consequently, the tug would hardly start pulling before their would be a whistle blast from a ship going to or from Shanghai, so that the line would have to be slackened off, and the tug moved out of the way. After the passage of the ship, there was again the tedious process of taking up the slack and moving into position for another pull.

All the time that this was happening, we could see a thick bank of yellow fog rolling slowly up the Yangtze toward us. By the time we finally were freed from the sandbar, the fog was enveloping us, the end result being that we remained anchored at that spot for three days. I mentioned earlier about the loss of the eggs and the weak financial position of the company. Food supplies had been calculated so tightly that, with the delay caused by the gales, we had very little food left; and we lived mainly on tinned kidneys for the 3 days at Woosung. Thank goodness I was raised in the English tradition and so liked kidney. We finally arrived at Shanghai on Feb. 1st, 1931, tied up to #42 buoy for those who know Shanghai. For those who don't it means that we were one heck of a way down the river from the big city, and we could only get ashore by hailing a sampan to take us to a nearby landing stage, where we would pick up a ricksha to carry on.

The trip from Woosung up to Shanghai on the Whanpoo River was intensely interesting, and those on the bridge had to be really alert. Traffic on that river at almost any time is like rush hour in big cities, the compacts and tractor-trailer rigs of the city being replaced by assorted sizes of junks, freighters, passenger and warships. Junks were the bane of a ship pilot's existence. A junk "captain" is very independent, and he will move to where it pleases him without any regard for protocol or consideration for other vessels. As a result, we had

some close shaves with some of these vessels — "close" meaning as near as 3 feet. One can't manoeuvre a large vessel with the same ease as a large car.

Now the task started of unloading the grain. It was destined for a mill on Soochow Creek, which was several miles away from our anchorage. The grain was bagged on board our ship, and then loaded into lighters alongside. After about 6 lighters were loaded, they were towed away in one long string up to the mill. It was left to the lighter owner to skulk his vessel all the way back to our ship to pick up his next load.

After about 2 days of discharging, an argument broke out between the checkers and some other stevedoring types (all Chinese) over procedures. This could not be resolved, so all walked off the ship in high dudgeon, and we were left to contemplate the banks of the Whangpoo in idleness.

Another 2 days elapsed before the problem was resolved and work resumed. Then Chinese New Year arrived, and all work stopped for some 5 days of revelry or whatever the celebrants chose to do to welcome the new year, causing more idleness and frustration.

This work having resumed, the lighter owners announced that they did not find it profitable to travel such long return trips from the flour mill, and until the Company could find a spot closer to Soochow Creek, the lightermen's services would be withheld. Another few days delay ensued until a dock could be found on the bank of the river opposite Honkgkew and much closer to the Creek. From then on, the only interruption to the operation was a brief flurry one day when a "bagger" lay on the bottom of a hold smoking and fell asleep, setting fire to the bags and wheat chaff on the deck of the hold, so that heavy smoke started pouring out the hatch. It did no damage of any consequence, but it did create a bit of panic for a while until the nature of the fire had been identified.



NEAR MISS IN HARBOUR HOUR RUSH



WILLIAM DEACON [Bill] 3490-P

As soon as we had entered port, Art's and my jobs had finished until we left port again. As a result, I wanted to get ashore at the first opportunity to get my first look at one of the Orient's most famous cities. Art and I set off in a sampan for the shore from our #42 buoy, and it was quite a shock to look back at the ship and see those big cracks in the sheerstrakes. I hadn't really appreciated how very serious our situation had been until now.

At the small quay at which we landed, there were 3 or 4 rickshas waiting for passengers, so we selected two drivers and were on our way to the centre of Shanghai. It was a strange feeling to ride a ricksha for the first time — a feeling of great guilt at being pulled along by a human being whose feet were covered with thin straw sandals on this cold February day. He coughed and panted as he struggled along Yangtzepoo with his human load. It seemed very cruel in a way, yet this was the way things were, and if I were not to use him, he simply would lose that much revenue. I understand that the rickshas were rented daily. So the driver was much concerned about earning at least his rent, plus a few cents to exist on.

At the end of the ride, we went through a routine that was to occur unfailingly every time we used one of these vehicles. The driver would complain, after being paid whatever we thought was reasonable, that either it was not enough or that the money was "brass". The quickest way to end that argument was to take the money back and walk off, at which point the matter was quickly settled by paying him what you already had established as being fair. There were some established "rules" regarding the appropriate fare for the distance travelled, and you earned no thanks or respect for anything substantially over that amount. It seemed to me that you simply got classified as a "patsy" on which the driver may then feel encouraged to try some other smart tricks to get still more. It was at this time that Communism was just starting to stir up interest, and one of the favorite targets for them were "foreign devils".

Art and I had a lunch (known there as "tiffin") at the Astor Hotel on the bank of Soochow Creek in Hongkew. After the very poor food aboard, particularly the very poorly made bread, it was a great sensation to eat slice after slice of beautiful white, crusty French bread with large gobs of butter on it. We practically made an hors d'oeuvres of the bread alone. The waiter must of wondered what kind of weirdos we were, although I guess they were never very surprised at the pécadillos of the "foreign devils". Anyway, the lunch put us in great shape for a cruise down the Bund, which is a large avenue along the shore of the Whangpoo, and which contains some fine big buildings, in which to house the more prosperous companies in Shanghai. To the best of my recollections, we then went along Nanking Road and visited a couple of large and well-known department stores. We ended this tour with a visit to another large hotel for a couple of snorts of Scotland's finest.

On either the first or second night of our arrival, a group of the boys took me on a long-promised tour of the seedy side of the city. Each of us had a rickshaw, and we started out at a dance hall that was staffed by White Russian girls. The term "White" distinguished them from "Reds". In other words they were members of the Russian bourgeois who had escaped from Russia in the Communist takeover of the Czarist regime. They were, of course, hard pressed for money, so some of the girls took to taxi-dancing to earn a living. Whether or not their services extended beyond that I did not explore.

After leaving that place, we were surprised to find that our ricksha boys had been waiting outside all this time, ready to take us to wherever else we planned to go. As we proceeded along, the places got seedier and seedier. Some of the women were in appalling condition both physically and in their dress. I remember watching with great disgust a fight breaking out be-

(Continued on Page 34)



Bill Deacon, VE3 BDO

(Continued from Page 33)

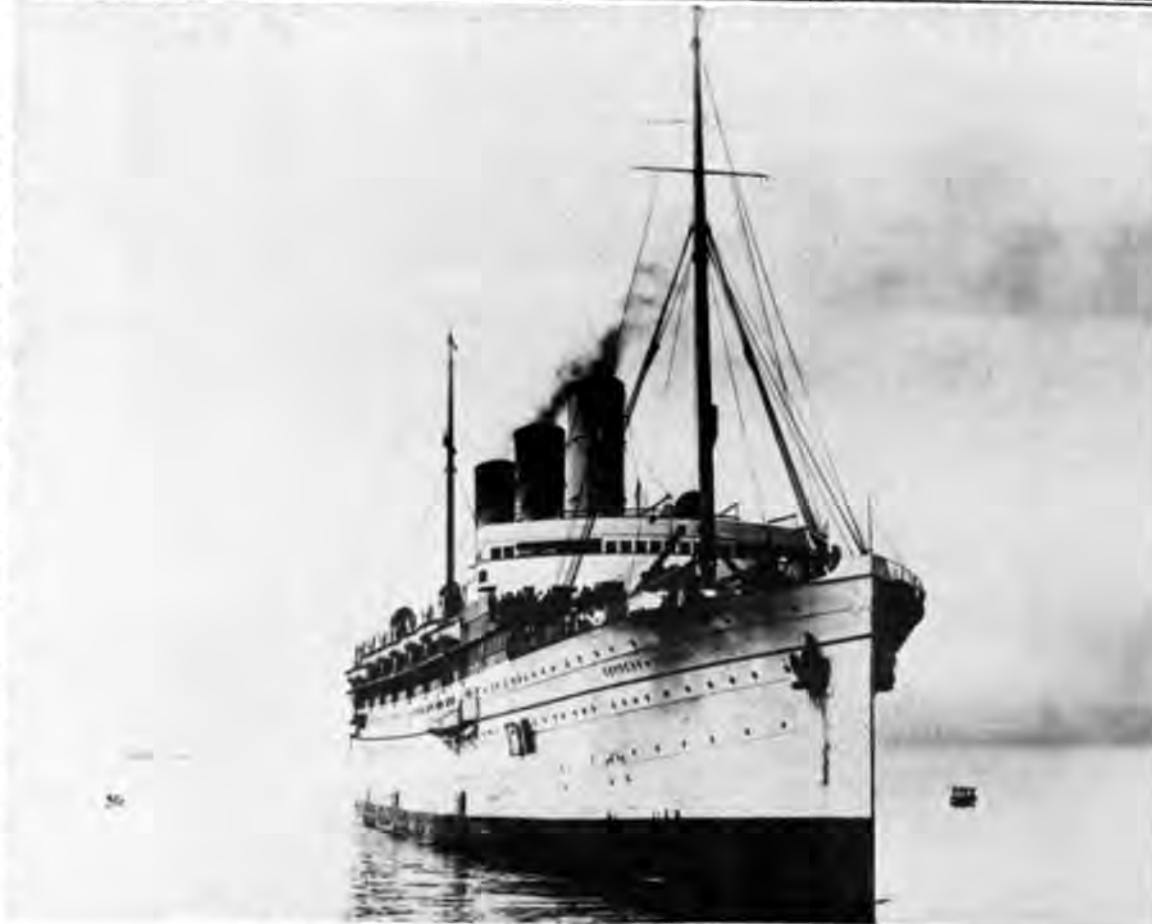
tween two seamen or firemen of a British ship over the favors of a Russian woman whose hair was matted and dirty; whose face was a caked mixture of powder and dirt; and whose clothes would not be fit even for a mop. While it was sickening to see, it was sad to later reflect on what situations or conditions brought her down to his level of human misery. After seeing this, and having in any case had more beer than I was used to, I announced that I would be only too happy to return shipside. The boys agreed, and our fleet of rickshas proceeded to a jetty where we could pick up a sampan to return to our anchorage.

It was a rainy night, and the five of us were under cover in the sampan, listening to the steady scrape of the scull in its lock. Eventually, I got curious and lifted the front hood of the sampan to check our progress. To my great shock, I found we were headed in another direction up a small canal. It was apparent that the sampan man had assessed our condition as being fit to be "rolled" by some of his friends. I had a blackjack up my sleeve, and I immediately dashed to the stern flourishing the blackjack and ordering the man to proceed forthwith to the ship. The rest of that trip, needless to say, was conducted under close monitoring. That was enough for me of Shanghai's night life. They could have it!!

I made several excursions ashore on my own during our stay in Shanghai. I always carried a small blackjack up my sleeve. This was used when a ricksha driver got a bit too rough about fare disagreements. It was only necessary to shake the blackjack out and look menacing with it to bring a rapid end to the argument.

On one shopping trip, I found an interesting curio shop, so I commenced negotiating for a pair of very interesting carvings of old Chinese men. The eyes and teeth were ivory insets. The first asking price was \$15 (Chinese), and then the haggling started. After my third trip out the door (I had been called back with new offers before I was through the door on the first two moves), I was some 10 yards down the street when the shop keeper came running after me with a new offer. I got that lovely pair of carvings for \$5, and he threw in a pair of silk lampshades.

On that shopping trip I had not carried the blackjack, and I was about to return to the ship from away up town. Consequently, I was looking for a ricksha boy who didn't look too tough to deal with. I was being pestered to death by scores of drivers who instantly recognized a stranger, and, hopefully, a sucker. I picked one who seemed to be OK and directed him to the jetty. This driver's sandals were really worn through, and he stopped several times on Yangtzepoo Road to pick things out of his feet. For some reason that I still cannot



### HMS. EMPRESS OF RUSSIA - VGKW

Member William Deacon [3490-P], Author of this article was Chief Radio Officer on the HMS Empress of Russia in 1938. He also sailed on the Empress of Asia, Empress of Canada, on the Canada - Orient Run and assigned many ships during his radio career. First Ship assignment was the SS Princess Victoria/VCDs. He also served at 3 land stations plus ground stations for Air Canada. Deacon was in the Orient at the time of the invasion of China by the Japanese and came within 75 feet of being captured by a Japanese patrol in Hongkew. He played a successful role in 1949 in successfully persuading the British government to enter experiments with long range air-ground HF radio telephone with commercial Trans-Atlantic flights.. He has an amateur radio station with call VE3UD

The HMS EMPRESS OF RUSSIA pictured above was one of the first liners to have a cruiser stern. This ship was built at Govan, Scotland and went into service in March 1913. For most of her years, she was operated by the Canadian Pacific Line in the trans-Pacific service. She was refitted as a troop transport early in World War One, and though chiefly engaged in carrying Canadian troops, occasionally sea-lifted U.S. Troops. This is how we received this picture as it was donated to the Society by Member Harold R. Barger who made the trip during WW1 as a "GI" to Europe but returned on the Olympic. The ship had a troop-carrying capacity of about 2820 officers and men.

During World War Two, The "Empress" again did service as a trooper. Her sailings being carried out under the direction of the British Ministry of War Transport. She was ruined by fire while refitting at the Vickers-Armstrong yard, in England. This happened in Sept. 1945; in 1946 she was broken up for her scrap metal.

She had an overall length of 590 feet and a 68-foot beam. The Empress of Russia had a gross tonnage of 16,810. She had a steam-turbine drive and four propellers. An extremely fast ship, she once held the east-bound trans-Pacific record of 8 days 18 hours, and was rated at 20 knots [ 23.02 m.p.s.] The Empress of Asia, an identical sister ship, was caught by Japanese aircraft off Singapore in February 1942 and sent to the bottom with a heavy loss of life.

W.A.B.

fathom, each time he did this people walking along the side of the road would close in on the ricksha. With some fear I kept urging the boy to go "chop chop", and he would look back at me with a withering stare of scorn, then slowly pick up the shafts and carry on.

When we arrived at the jetty, I piled my parcels under one arm and felt through my pocket for the appropriate payment of 40 cents. He put this in his pocket and spoke to me sharply and menacingly in his own language.

I didn't know the words, but I got the drift. Being a very stubborn man, I had no intention of giving in to him if I could at all avoid it, so I brushed him aside and headed toward a sampan at the edge of the jetty. The ricksha driver darted around in front of me and bunted me backward with his chest, obviously hostile words being hurled at me simultaneously. I tried the same manoeuvre again with the same result. A group of about 5 other Chinese were a few feet away watching this with great interest. I looked over to them and asked "Can anyone here speak English?" ... no response. More pushing and shoving ensued, and I didn't want to put the parcels down and threaten the rick-

sha driver with fists, since he would simply have picked up the parcels and dashed off. I called to the group once again, and one man came over and announced in fairly good style that he could indeed speak English. I said: "Ask him what he wants". The response was that the driver hadn't been paid enough and wanted more. I said "Tell him I've spent all my money on these parcels". The driver pointed to one of my pockets and chattered out something. The interpreter said "He wants to know how much you have in that pocket". That pocket was bulging with some paper money and some Mexican silver dollars. I reached in and pulled out what I thought was a 50 cent "shin plaster" and stated that that was all I had and that I needed it for the sampan. The instant my hand brought forth the 50 cents, the driver snatched it from my hand and picked up his shafts and was off.

Now I got into the sampan and ordered the man to proceed shipside. He pulled the usual stunt of asking for payment first. This is a favorite manoeuvre. After taking the payment and getting well away from the shore, he would announce that he wanted more money, otherwise he wouldn't move. The experienced traveller knows enough to with-

hold any payment until arrival. wanted no more nonsense, and, being on the boat, I could lay the parcels down, go up to the man and threaten him with my fist unless he proceeded. He gave up quickly and we terminated that little jaunt with a safe arrival plus mutterings of discontent from the sampan man over his fare. To heck with it ... I was safe on board.

When we were at the dock in Pootung, many kids used to gather along the dockside and plead for money of "cumsha". One of our favorite pastimes became to change a couple of dollar bills into pennies, then stand at the rail and toss them overboard one at a time, and watch the scurry and flurry while the kids garnered their harvest. In short order, an individual would appear on the scene with a charcoal brazier on one end of this pole and a container of other things at the other end. Very soon he would have the brazier in operation and would have some kind of batter frying in oil over the fire. The kids, of course, had a ball buying all that good stuff at the expense of the rick "foreign devils"

Word got around that the Russian sale of the ship was cancelled, so that we were to

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

We wish to thank the Canadian Amateur Magazine "TCA" for permission to reprint the story of Bill Deacon - SOWP Member. The QTH of "TCA" is P.O. Box 356, Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 4W2. "TCA" by the way is a very fine publication which you might enjoy. It is slanted toward the Canadian Amateurs but contains a lot of good reading.

W.A.B.

return to Vancouver. In the meantime, doubling plates had been riveted over the four cracks in the sheerstrakes. The doubling plates looked rather inadequate, being about 1 inch thick and about 3 ft by 1 ft in size. Anyway, we finished our discharging on Feb. 28th and sailed the next day to a Japanese coaling port of Nishi-Karatsu, somewhat north of Nagasaki on Japan's west coast. We had burned oil on the way out, but since we were returning "light ship", and since coal was much more economical, and also there was no urgency about our return, it was decided to use coal. No additional firemen were hired for the coal operation because we wouldn't be operating at full speed (13 knots).

We anchored at Nishi-Karatsu, and then lighters full of coal were towed alongside. A human escalator of Japanese men and women in black garments established itself from the lighter to coaling chute in the side of the ship. Small wicker baskets were loaded with coal at the lighter and passed from person to person in a continually flowing chain to be dumped into the chute. That is, the coal was dumped and the baskets tossed down to the deck of the lighter. This went on for lighter after lighter throughout the day, with only a break for food. As soon as the coaling was finished, we lifted anchors and were on our way back to Vancouver.

A day after we had left Japan, we received a message from the owner advising that it was imperative we reach Vancouver by March 16th to pick up another load of grain. Otherwise we would lose the contract. This called for more speed, hence more steam, hence more coal-shovelling. Since we did not have a full firing staff on board, this placed a great strain on the engine room crew, and there were some threats of mutiny. I don't know how the problem was resolved, but we did get more speed.

In the meantime, another gale sprung up around us, and the ship with its patched sheerstrakes took another pounding. There was great concern now over how we would stand up to the pounding at the speed at which we were operating. Anyway, the gale abated and we continued on to Vancouver without further ado, arriving as ordered on March 16th, 1931.

I was asked to remain signed on for the next voyage, but I felt that there were better ways to live than on that miserable, underfitted ship. Two of its sister ships had gone to the bottom in the North Pacific, and I couldn't help but feel that the Company's luck was running a bit thin. 1931 was a tough year for a junior operator like me, the depression being in full swing, etc., but I preferred that to a rather tenuous future on the Chief Capilano.

I was not able to follow its subsequent history closely, but I do know that it was sold to Philippine interests and renamed the Don Jose. I did see it once in Hong Kong some years later looking much the worse for wear.

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# THE VOICE IN THE NIGHT

*John Avire Nash*

Reprinted from Wireless Age - April 1914

*We're two nights out from England,  
And steaming fast for home,  
But in the head 'phones on my ears  
No messages intone.  
For awful is the scourge of war,  
When proud and mighty ships  
Must steal about with voices stilled,  
Like thieves with silent lips.*

Missing the cheery buzz of traf',  
I cuss the lagging clock;  
I nod; and doze . . . When sudden comes  
A rude and chilling shock!  
The hum and drone of a distant spark  
Pounds hard with nervous stress,  
The call that chills the heart to stone—  
The beseeching S O S.

A shivering, creeping chill I feel,  
That comes with the silent Fear;  
I straighten, tense upon my chair,  
Pressing 'phones to the list'ning ear  
For he's many, many miles away,  
And his spark is almost drowned;  
He sounds a call . . . and silence then  
Succeeds the awful sound.

I hope with all my power to hope  
In that silence so profound;  
And, barely breathing, reach the switch  
When my hand drops quickly down,  
As in my receiver comes a buzz:  
"I'm K S F, hard by."  
And he begins to whisper queries  
To that lone, despairing cry.

More silence then, for moments long,  
While dread gnaws at the heart,  
But again through the ether spaces  
The S O S calls dart.

Then I hear his fingers, more composed,  
Begin to spell out sense;  
And the cool and steady signals  
Lift a world-load of suspense.

He's in the Bay of Biscay,  
Just where, he can hardly state;  
But the ship seems badly wounded,  
And he implores us all to wait.  
So I turn and 'phone to the pilot-house,  
And tell them all I know.  
'God help them!' breathes the officer,  
"No use for us to go."

"We couldn't, had we twice the speed,  
Get over in a day;  
The distance that's between us—  
Nine hundred miles, I'd say."  
Just then that spark zit-zits again:  
"Tis a wireless false alarm!  
The ship's wound he thought was mortal  
Has done but little harm.

"We're all right now," comes the report,  
"To Vigo we'll proceed.  
But thanks, old man on the K S F,  
For standing by in need. . ."  
Then the ether filled with buzzing sound  
Slips quietly to rest,  
And the Kroonland, good old rescue ship,  
Plows steadily toward the West.

*We're two nights out from England,  
And steaming fast for home,  
But in the head 'phones on my ears  
No messages intone.  
For awful is the scourge of war,  
When proud and mighty ships  
Must steal about with voices stilled,  
Like thieves with silent lips.*



## Who Decided and Why

BY— DONALD K. DE NEUF

What was the rationale behind deciding on sixty cycles (Hertz) as a frequency for commercial AC power? Why not sixty-five, or eighty or a hundred? Some years ago parts of the Los Angeles area employed fifty cycles. There were AC "Telechron" clocks then in existence. What happened to them when the frequency was eventually standardized at 60Hz? Did everybody simply have to buy new clocks, or did the utility company replace them, maybe free? (For many years the lights in the New York City subways operated from a 25 cycle source - and visibly flickered. And, there used to be a lot of DC in the city. Presumably this harked back to Edison's early power plants, and since most of the old elevators were DC operated, the source was probably continued for a rather long period of time). But why 110 volts as a national power standard? Why not 100 or 150 volts? Incidentally, most commercial aircraft today employ 400 Hertz power - I suppose the transformers are lighter in weight for one thing.

On audio disc records, why was a speed of 78 RPM adopted? Why not 70 or 80 RPM? Why the 33-1/3 RPM speed for modern LP records? Why not 30 or 40 RPM? Was there some reason related to such speed as one third of 100 RPM or something?

Why was 35 mm chosen for motion picture film? Why 35?

On TV standards world-wide, there are several different systems - our NTSC, BBC, PAL, and SECAM. There used to be a joke amongst TV engineers that PAL stood for "Pay and Learn", and that SECAM really meant "Supreme Effort to Counter American Methods". They said our NTSC signified "Never Twice the Same Color". (What an electronic nightmare on inter-country program exchanges! As bad as the old Australian railroads with three different gauges!)

TV and FM broadcasting in the UK utilizes (or did use) vertical polarization (the vertical antennae on homes displayed this), whereas in the US and many other places horizontal polarization is employed. I seem to vaguely recall that in the early FM/TV days the FCC decreed horizontal polarization because, they said, it was less vulnerable than vertical to man-made noise - automobile ignition, brush motors, etc.

The international standard of 500 KHz (600 meters) for marine distress calls has been in existence for many years. I never knew why this particular frequency was chosen until I read somewhere that in the early days of spark 600 meters came close to resonance matching for the length of an antenna stretched between the masts of the average sized seagoing vessel.

No doubt there are good answers to the foregoing questions hidden somewhere. Comments from readers are solicited - as well as remarks on other possible enigmas.

## "ESP" Alerts Operator to SOS

By Leslie B. Veader 934-P

**G**On Aug. 23, 1923, while serving as wireless officer on the tanker SS CHARLES PRATT (KSQ) the following incidents were experienced.

In order to receive NBA, NSS, NPM, etc., on long wave I like many other carried a set of three honey comb coils. These were wired into the 106B receiver and having no switch it was necessary to connect them each day and remove them after reception.

After press at 11 p.m. on Aug. 23, 1923, when we were off Cape San Lazaro, Cal., I was so tired that it was imperative that I get to bed immediately.

As I lay in bed it was impossible for me to sleep as something kept saying, "Go back and activate that receiver as it is inoperative and an emergency might occur."

This condition continued and at 3 a.m. being wide awake I proceeded to the radio room and reconnected the 106B to the 600 meter band whereupon I received an SOS very loud and apparently close at hand.

I answered the call of the SS DAKOTAN and after obtaining his T R awoke the Captain.

We were just 30 miles north of the DAKOTAN and would arrive in three hours. Upon arrival we were unable to free the ship from the beach, but held her steady and between us she was floated.

As we approached the Florida coast the press reported that seven US destroyers had gone aground on the same approximate position thereby indicating a strong current had set them all on the beach in bright moonlight.

Over the years I have had other incidents where ESP surely was present and by today's standards of thinking I'm sure it has some merit.



"Observations"  
50 Years as a "Pro."  
1111-P

## THE HERITAGE OF A PROUD SOCIETY

### EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Author of the following article has been going to sea as a Radio-Officer for over fifty years. He has been a keen observer of the transition of ship communication systems and modes over the years. Likewise, he has kept informed of matters that concern and effect the Radio Officers in their daily life aboard ship or on their assigned stations. We think he has the ability to present his views and perspective in a very interesting manner.

The Society on many occasions, has indicated that stories and articles contributed by members or others do not necessarily reflect Society endorsement of opinions or views expressed, which we think is very understandable. Author "Jock" Maclaren started his career in 1924 on the SS PATIA/GDCY. He has been going to sea steady every since. His views and insight into many matters concerning radio men should be of considerable interest, especially to us indigent operators who signed on at the magnificent salary of \$30.00 per month.

By  
**Harry A. Maclaren**



In all paths of human endeavour there eventually will come a time when some interested or misguided individual must inevitably stick their neck out and thereby invite the axe which prepares the proverbial chicken for the pot. Why does one do this? Because, I venture to say, somewhere in our long-suffering innards a seething cauldron of resentment is a'simmering and a'boiling . . . in this same "cauldron" was boiled the brew which runneth over and made history as the well-mashed Boston Tea Party; which splashed over its brim and flowed as the French Revolution; which bubbles and steams and causes men to take a well-aimed poke at their immediate superior and damn the consequences.

For better or worse, as the saying goes, I shall now join the ranks (in a small way, one might say) as one of those whose cauldron of resentment approached boiling-point. I shall now unburden myself by writing about Radio Officers who belittle their own profession, Radio Officers whose interest in Radio died the death on the day they obtained their original license, and Radio Officers who use a Union's good services for employment when, if, and maybe, it is convenient to their many other interests to "take a trip" as a Radio Officer on board ship. If this is heresy, so be it . . .

It would be only fair to start by recording the fact that I have worked as Radio Officer on board merchant ships flying the flags of Great Britain, Honduras, Panama, and the United States for the past 50-odd years. I was born in Hull, Yorkshire, England, my father was a Scotsman, my mother Swedish. I landed in the United States in February, 1938. As I look upon--and still look upon--the decision of changing one's country and citizenship as a very serious, very personal decision, it took me fourteen years consideration before I became a full United States citizen.

I worked thirteen years as Wireless Officer for the Marconi International Marine Communication Co., Ltd., of London (later called the British Wireless Marine Service following the amalgamation with the Radio

Communications Co., of London.) I worked for the United Fruit & S.S. Co., Boston, Mass., as Radio Officer for eleven years. Throughout the World War II I was at sea. I have now sailed close to 20 years as Radio Officer with the Mississippi S.S. Co., of New Orleans, La., now known as Delta Steamship Lines, Inc. I possess the F.C.C. First Class Radiotelegraph License, First Class F.C.C. Radiotelephone License, the F.C.C. Radar Endorsement; I completed the U.S. Maritime Institute Radio Theory Course and, if of any interest, I also possess the British First Class Postmaster General's Radiotelegraph/Radiotelephone Certificate (invalidated by U.S. Citizenship), a Panama Government Radiotelegraph Certificado and a Honduran Radiotelegraph Certificado. I am a Radio Amateur, a member of the A.R.R.L., with their official code-speed certificate for 35 words per minute. (Amateur call-signal is W5FGO).

I offer the above information only to suggest that when I discuss the shipboard Radio Officer and his work I must to some extent know whereof I speak. You may now plug-in your electronic grindstones and whet your axes in preparation for my early decapitation!

When, how, and from where, I ask you, did any Radio Officer adopt the unbelievably silly mental attitude which causes a man to belittle his own job? What is unworthy or "lowering" about working for one's livelihood in the service of the U.S. Merchant Marine? What is so wrong about making a career of going to sea as a Radio Officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine? What is wrong or derogatory in staying-on with and doing any honest job?

These are the questions which raise themselves in my mind when I hear my life-long job as Radio Officer belittled and even ridiculed by those misinformed or those willfully, maliciously, or merely thoughtlessly intent on destroying the repute of a group of men who pioneered and brought into our existence on earth a New Age of world-wide communication.

That is no exaggeration of the facts. The shipboard Wireless Operator was indeed a pioneer in the development of what we now know as Radio. Some of the earliest experiments in "wireless telegraphy" were shared in no small measure by the merchant ship's operator, known then as a Marconi Operator, or "Wireless men."

In those days--even while I have been going to sea--the "wireless operator" was considered something of a ridiculous figure, a gawkish and unwanted interloper upon the jealous hearth of shipboard family life. We took many a slight, many a verbal slap and ill-meant jibe before we won our spurs, so to speak. We have since become a grudgingly but respected and accepted part in the high tradition of the sea and ships. "Sparks" we were named, and the name was not given in ridicule--we had earned it the hard way.

The Radio Officer today owes a heavy debt to those lonely, isolated men who tinkered, cursed, and tinkered some more far out at sea to make their primitive "wireless apparatus" work when it would not work. From their much-laughed at efforts was laid the foundation upon which was erected the house in which we Radio Officers live today. Those men were the Founding Fathers of our Radio Officer's job. They created our job, confirmed it, and made it stick as a job. Not only that, they were also the small, embryonic nucleus which many years later was to grow



and develop into the Electronic Age, which, in its turn, is now tip-toeing into the dizzying world of Atomic Energy. From small beginnings . . .

It is a good thing, sometimes, in these days of skepticism and cynicism, to look back. For while looking back, we might indeed wonder whether or not we of Today are worthy of the heritage left to us by the men of Yesterday. I still believe we are worthy of that heritage. It is the occasional individual who casts the shadow of doubt across my mind, the individual who speaks thoughtlessly, lives thoughtlessly, acts carelessly, and works carelessly. This individual and his mental attitude toward Life, Living, and his Work, can, and does, wreck the structure which others gone before struggled so mightily to build.

The Marconi Operator begat the Wireless Operator, who begat the Wireless Officer, who begat the Radio Operator, who begat the Radio Officer . . . a title wherein lies hidden many an unknown struggle, many a bitter fight for recognition, many a heroic death.

I am not in any way trying to prove or sell the Radio Officer's job as the most important or glamorous job on earth, or that we as a group carry the destiny of the world on our shoulders. It isn't, and we don't. I am reiterating, however, in a few brief sentences, that our heritage and reputation as a group of skilled men is not by any means a legacy to be lightly cast aside. To the contrary, if I may be old-fashioned and stuffy for a moment, I would say that the Radio Officer today should be justifiably proud of his work, his position on board ship, and his job. I would like to add here, however, that the Radio Officer should not at any time get the idea that he alone on his ship has been blessed with a modicum of intelligence. The Radio Officer is a seaman, among seamen, he lives as an essential part in the world of seamen and ships, and, in so doing, he is properly justified in occupying his proven place in the high traditions of the sea. He is not justified in being a prig. You could, if it pleases you, apply this last not-too-clever statement to any person of any group, in any walk of Life, upon any level of social strata, and it will stand—no person is justified or even entitled to become the prig . . . especially within the narrow confines of shipboard life.

In my voluntarily adopted country of our United States of America, one of the greater privileges of living is the privilege of becoming a drunk or a director, a punk or a president. It is up to you to make the choice. Happily, the large majority of Americans historically have made the proper choice, proving, to the consternation of Old World thinking, that the individual human being, left to his own devices and living in a free and tolerant society, does, has, and will attain to the higher plane of human living on earth . . .

You do not have to be a Radio Officer. You can be anything your God-given talent and native intelligence says you can be. We cannot all—not even in the United States of America!—succeed in becoming captains of industry, millionaires, bank presidents, or what have you. Let's face it! Most of us merely drift into something, or one thing after another, for no really thought-out reason; some like the quiet life, some like the here-today-gone-tomorrow life, some live in a continuous state of turmoil and get along well enough. It's up to you, OM—you looks 'em over an' you takes your pick . . .

If you should, for any reason or desire whatsoever, become or have become a Radio Officer in the U. S. Merchant Marine, then I, as an old timer, hasten to assure you that you have chosen a good and worthy job of work, and, in addition, you have joined an international fraternity of quiet and friendly men rare indeed to this frantic Age of Man. If you choose, or "drift" into make a career of "going to sea" as a Radio Officer, with all its many sacrifices, its loneliness, monotony, its moments of peril, its advantages and disadvantages, we will welcome you and wish you Godspeed and good sailing . . .

In any group of specialized working-man, it is but human and very natural that within that group there will always be found individual members more expert and adept in their specialized work than other members. Our own group, specializing in marine radio

communication and its appropriate equipment, is no exception to this rule. Some of us found the mystery of Radio in theory and practice—and still do!—an illusive and difficult mystery to understand. Some of us found this same mystery comparatively easy to understand. A few of us found the mystery was happily and clearly right up our alley and mere ducksoup. I was not one of the last-mentioned lucky ones! My Scottish and Swedish ancestors, however, have given me the proverbial stubbornness of the mule and I am at last able to boast of knowing the positive and negative ends of a battery, that electricity can kill a guy, etc.

I "came in" when vacuum tubes (wireless valves, the Limeys called them) were in their infancy and not quite to be trusted. I sailed on a number of British merchant ships equipped with the following antique furniture: 1½ KW, ½KW, or ¼KW Marconi Rotary Spark Gap main transmitter, a 10-inch Induction Coil Emergency Transmitter, and the Marconi 31-A Balanced Crystal Receiver. Later we proudly hammered on the Marconi 1½KW Quenched Gap transmitter which at times would pump a good 15 amperes into the antenna and swamp a receiver's dial over an arc of 30 degrees of tuning-scale! There was no such thing in our vocabulary as the word "frequency." We used wavelengths. We called, worked traffic, TR'd and handled most everything on 600 meters—500 kilocycles to you. Time signals, etc., were obtained when-and-if from GBR (Rugby, England), 18,740 meters; FYL (Bordeaux, France), 19,100 meters; POZ (Nauen, Germany), 18,626 meters—if my memory isn't at fault. Traffic was mostly sent via the nearest coast station wherever one's ship happened to be, and forwarded via the cable routes around the world. The Amateur Radio fans at that time were on the eve of discovering the communication possibilities of the "short waves" which the grey-beards of radio had pooh-pooed as impractical for long-distance communication!

Since those days "wireless" has become Radio. The field of Radio moved so rapidly ahead that the First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Wireless Telegraphy as issued after examination to British wireless operators by the Office of the Postmaster General in London, was re-called and re-issued as Second Class under a new ruling adopted following the 1932 International Telecommunication Convention held in Madrid, Spain. This cancellation of our First Class "tickets" told us in no uncertain terms that our previous knowledge of Radio was considered insufficient and lacking when faced by the rapid technical advances being made. We were to get on the ball and learn our Radio again, or else . . .

Well, we done larned it. We began to look askant at the men who continued to sail on a Second Class Certificate, and, I think, it was right that we did so. It meant clearly only one thing: lack of interest in becoming as expert as possible in their work. In the old and now defunct A. W. C. T. of Great Britain (the Association of Wireless and Cable Telegraphists), most of us agreed that it was essential that our comparatively small membership of seagoing Wireless Operators should endeavour to be as expert and up-to-date in our specialized field as individually possible. This was, and always is to any group, a very ambitious goal to aim at. But the idea is to keep on aiming at it for the good of the group as a whole.

You may be wondering what this resume touching on the "good old days" (you can have them!) is leading up to. I will tell you. There are Radio Officers among us today whose interest in Radio had dwindled to the point where at times they must call in their ship's electrician or somebody else to "help them out" to repair simple breakdowns of the ship's radio equipment. There are other Radio Officers who today are still sailing on their Second Class F.C.C. License long after they have satisfied the "six months" and "one year's" sea service requirements.

The parallel is clearly drawn and repeated. What took place in the early 1930's is taking place again, and it's bad medicine.

I do not in any way suggest that we should join the crackpot ranks of the perfectionist, or take our Radio Officer's job so seriously that we lose our sense of humour and tolerance. But I cannot stress too strongly that the standard set by the individual



Radio Officer will inevitably be the standard tagged upon all Radio Officers. The sum integrity of the community rests upon the unit integrity of the individual, so to speak. We all understand this. To not understand it is dangerous to our hard-won reputation, our traditionally accepted high standard as a group of skilled men. Fellows, let's keep it high. The Radio Officer's job is well worth the effort, and the effort will pay us dividends which, although mostly invisible, are nonetheless very important to us.

The number of Radio Officers' jobs available at any time depends directly upon the number of merchant ships in active operation and "going to sea." We are all aware of this fact. In recent years we have had a greater number of Radio Officers than ships for them to work on. We are also all aware of this fact. This situation, in plain truth, is caused by the obvious fact that we have more Radio Officers on our Union membership than there are jobs for them.

This above unfortunate unbalance between too many members and too few jobs develops a highly sensitive mix-up; on one side those of us who have jobs, on the other side those of us who do not have jobs. The mix-up was inevitable, and, of course, will never fail to repeat itself under any similar future situation. It is a normal, very human reaction.

As inevitable as the above mentioned mix-up, was the development of what may best be described as the "part time" Radio Officer. This term is not coined or intended in any disparaging way or in criticism—the term merely says best what I want to say.

There were—and still are—three kinds or types of "part time" Radio Officer:

1. The "career" Radio Officer (the man who has spent years on the job at sea and who very probably will continue going to sea indefinitely, who through no fault of his own but as a result of ship lay-up is "beached" and out of a job.
2. The "occasional trip" Radio Officer (the man who has a shore-job or other source of income making him not wholly dependent upon his Radio Officer's job) who continues as a Union member in good standing and uses his paid-for privilege via the Union's services to "take a trip" when in need of extra money or merely to "get away from it all."
3. The "good time Charlie" Radio Officers (the men who are content to stay on the job until they have saved-up enough money to live ashore for a time) who drop into the Union's offices looking for a Radio Officer's job when their spending-money is running low.

The three above "part time" Radio Officers types, as members of the Union, are all perfectly within their rights of doing what they are doing. The Union would be wrong in every way to try to teach any member how to live his life or arrange his own affairs. Each individual must decide that for himself. . .

Of the three "part time" Radio Officers types, the first or "career" man is the member who is obviously the more important, more worthy of notice Radio Officer. I say "obviously" because it is quite clear to any of us that this particular union member is with us to stay. The man who stays is always important to any organization. Not only that, many of our "career" Radio Officers vividly remember the sub-human, pig-sty existence lived by ship's crews in past years, the memory of which—to put it mildly—is apt to make a man believe more strongly in the principles of Unionism. This does not imply, of course, that the other two types of "part time" Radio Officer mentioned do not subscribe to those principles.

The periods, past and present, during which merchant shipping suffered slump conditions and Radio Officers' jobs were few and far between, have always struck particularly hard on my so-called "career" Radio Officer simply because his job on board ships at sea is the only job he knows, the only job he wants, the only job he has.

This problem I am taking the liberty of discussing, the problem of too many Radio Officers and too few

ships, is not by any means open to any easy solution from either the Union viewpoint or the Union membership viewpoint. I do suggest, however, that it would help to ease the situation if we tightened-up on those among us who are using the Union's services erratically, i.e., the members who occupy numbers on our National "beach list" only as "job security," the members who turn down offered jobs too often, the members who will ship-out only on certain ships and on certain "runs," etc. And, of course, it would also help the situation by continuing to clear out all "drunks" and "performers" after reasonable warning. The latter point is essential to the good name of the Union and our own reputation. Any Union is a serious organization devoted to the betterment of its membership—no Union can afford to place itself in a position of disrepute, ridicule, or bad publicity by irresponsibility on the part of any individual member. We all know that, anyway.

I am wandering off the track here a little, but while on this subject I would like to go a little further. There are some who have suggested and discussed the idea of compulsory "time off" during shipping slump conditions for all Radio Officers holding permanent assignments, thereby creating temporary job-openings for Union members out of work. You have all heard about the "75 days off a year" idea.

The idea is, in my opinion, against the basic principle of the Labor Union Movement, which is, simply speaking, a collective endeavour to obtain for the worker fair wages, fair working conditions, and, most important of all, job security. Once you play around, put aside, or otherwise interfere with this foundation, whatever the provocation may be, you dangerously undermine the structure of the principle it supports.

The word "compulsory" or any equivalent word or phrase, is dangerous in itself. If Union members—and this is applicable to any Union whatsoever—are required by compulsory clause of their Union rules to periodically vacate their job, then, by the same token, it is but a short step to the stage whereby the Union member is denied by compulsory clause of Union rule his or her right to quit, the right to speak his opinion, the right to his native individualism. It is a disease which becomes malignant, strangles the individual member's economic and personal liberty, and gradually submerges the Union membership into the nauseous swamp of controlled human regimentation . . . a condition which completely denies the basic democratic foundation of our American "way of life," which, in its turn, and as a sop for the cynics among us, although not perfect, is as good and better than the masses of any country has enjoyed to this date in our history of Man.

I suggest the Union steer clear away from any plan which hints at or suggests compulsory job-sharing or job-spreading across our membership. It is definitely not good Union to dictate to a member the number of days he may work per year. The duty of any Union is to protect, assist, advance, and safeguard the security of the individual members job, not—I repeat—not to jeopardize or intimidate its existence.

If, however, a "time off" scheme could be arranged on a strictly individual, personal, and voluntary basis, with no censure or harmful criticism visited upon the members who disagree or choose not to cooperate—well, it could help.

To my way of thinking, it would be far wiser and far better for the Union membership as a whole to increase contributions per year and reduce membership, than to increase membership while fully aware that newly-joined members must wait indefinitely for the chance of a job, and, at the same time aggravating the situation by increasing the load of members already on our "beach lists." Available jobs for Radio Officers are limited, therefore, in some way, it is surely necessary to limit our total membership.

After reading over what I have written, I see that here and there I undoubtedly have invited the "axe which prepares the chicken for the pot." It has, however, all been written in good spirit and certainly with no malice to anyone nor in judgement of anyone. The "cauldron" has indeed runneth over! Well, for better or worse, it is written, and I hope some of it will be found of use or interest to us.



# SOWP CHAPTERS & THEIR MEMBERS



Members Capital Area Chapter - March 17 '84 Reunion

- |                            |                               |                               |                              |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 UNIDENTIFIED             | 10 Lewis E. Danes 386-P       | 19 Albert Stern 4097-V        | 28 John J. Kelleher 2581-P   |
| 2 Fred Richardson 1672-SGP | 11 Helen Danes                | 20 Ruth Barnabei              | 29 UNIDENTIFIED              |
| 3 George McLeod 137-P      | 12 Steven L. Windes 3991-P    | 21 Jack Farrance 1591-V       | 30 John E. Platt 2724-V      |
| 4 Fava Sherrard 137-TA     | 13 Elaine Waldo               | 22 John Swafford 783-V        | 31 Fred J. Friel 2617-V      |
| 5 UNIDENTIFIED             | 14 James L. Mulhern 3327-P    | 23 Ann Swafford               | 32 Hyman Wallin 426-SGP      |
| 6 Helen McLeod             | 15 George Waldo 3160-SGP      | 24 UNIDENTIFIED               | 33 Manuel Botelho 2241-V     |
| 7 Leo M. Carreras 1079-SGP | 16 UNIDENTIFIED               | 25 William B. Morton 3072-V   | 34 UNIDENTIFIED              |
| 8 Leroy H. Tuttle 4284-P   | 17 George M. Bartlett 2933-P  | 26 Paula Popovich             | 35 George E. Favre 236-P     |
| 9 Camille Carreras         | 18 Emerson R. Mehrling 2500-P | 27 Robert Kreisinger 2534-SGP | 36 William J. Brown 2199-SGP |



Colt's Neck Inn N.J. Nov.14 1984 Pickerill Chapter

[Pictured Left to Right] - Picture taken Nov. 14 1984, Colts Neck Inn  
**EARL W. KORF** - 613-P (K2IC) Lincroft N.J. Former Director Elmo Pickerill Chapter. Area Representative for Society.

**EMERSON R. "EM" MEHRLING** - 2500-P (W4NH) Fairfax, VA. Former Director Chapter X. Now 'acting' Vice President P&R. "Em" is also Wing Director Washington D.C. Chapter. Also Chapter amateur net/s official.

**WILLIAM A. BRENNIMAN** - 1-SGP, (Formerly "6BE/W6BE" 1922-32) Santa Rosa, CA. Founder SOWP, Former President and currently Executive Director.

**THOMAS G. KILPATRICK** - 2989-P (W2AGT) Boothwyn, PA. Currently Director Elmo Pickerill Chapter (XI)

**JOHN L. "Jack" KELLEHER** - 2581-P (W4ZC) Annandale, VA. Director Capital Area Chapter SOWP. Nominated as Vice President (Senior) vice "Pete" Fernandez (SK)

**COLT'S NECK INN** It might be hard to locate on your map but it was well known as a 'Coach Stop' in early days - before trains etc. It is not far from Lincroft NJ. Asbury Park is almost directly East on Highway 537. Taking exit 98 on the Garden State Parkway and driving North on Route 34 will bring you right to it..

## Meet Eric Walter, Director SOWP Swiss Chapter

ERIC WALTER  
1536-M



Top picture shows Eric working his station "HB9CHE" in Hoeri, Switzerland ( a short distance north of Zurich). The bottom picture is the computer part of his 'rig'. The "EDELWEISS" Chapter currently has 31 members (paid up 1985). They are quite active with meetings several times yearly and occasional trips to visit interesting facilities. Eric has extended welcome to those visiting Switzerland to give him a call or write. [ QTH - 8181 Hoeri ] Phone 01-8605069. Perhaps you could attend a meeting or they would enjoy a visit.





# A SALUTE TO THE 'UNSUNG' HEROES WHO HAVE SAILED THE SEVEN SEAS

## THE SEA TAKES ITS TOLL

For weeks the restless Atlantic has been a seething cauldron seeking to engulf human life. Almost nightly the air has been filled with S. O. S. calls from mariners in distress. And almost daily the landmen in his snug, comfortable quarters on shore has read of gallant rescues in howling gales, of waves breaking over great ships, of blinding snow storms, of men who have given their very lives without an instant's hesitation in the heroic endeavor to save human life.

The battle between man and the elements goes on unceasingly. If there has been a toll of twenty-seven lives taken from the wreck of half a dozen ships there is also the glory story of the rescue of eighty-eight seamen who but for the use of the wireless and the daring of their fellow navigators would have gone down with their vessels.

There are many newspaper readers who will recall the thrill of that first wireless emergency call, when the steamship Grand Republic, on fire at sea, sent its despairing wail across the ether; when there was at first a hush as though the very universe stood still; then the answering words of encouragement from a dozen great liners changing their course and hurrying under forced draft to save life. Then came the launching of the Titanic—its very name a defiance of the elements. The proud announcement of its builders that at last man had produced an "unsinkable" ship had a dramatic answer when the giant vessel struck an iceberg on its maiden voyage. But the wireless brought the Carpathia to pick up as many of the survivors as could crowd into the boats when man's "unsinkable" ship went to the bottom.

The war made such tragedies all too common. It was not the elements, but the cowardly dagger of an unseen assassin that sent the Lusitania, the Arabic, the Sussex, and many another vessel to the graveyard of ships.

Still the fight of man against the elements goes on, and gradually, with each advance in science, with each new discovery, it appears that more and more man is winning the battle. But older than Marconi and his chattering wireless, old almost as the ocean itself, is that imperishable courage of them that go down to the sea in ships, that willingness to risk their lives cheerfully if by so doing perchance they may save human life. That tradition knows no race, nor creed, nor nation. The Belgian Arminco rushes to the aid of the distressed Norwegian freighter, Dybwad, and takes off a crew of twenty-five in a howling gale. The German liner Westphalia rescues twenty-seven men from the sinking Dutch freighter Alkaid; the American liner President Roosevelt brings safely into port the captain and crew of the British freighter Antioch.

The sea still takes its toll. Twenty-seven lives have been lost in the gales of the last ten days. But there is cause for rejoicing. Eighty-eight men have been snatched from the jaws of death. Mariners of many nations have demonstrated anew that those who follow their calling have lost nothing of their courage or skill.



OUR CONVOY

Once when my consciousness matured  
I chose the world for a toy  
but after a thousand departures  
part of a beleaguered convoy

Through hostile seas I am sailing  
on a course that evokes ill-fate  
and many a friend succumbing  
for to stop means to terminate

When another comrade is going  
my poor arms fall short of aid  
and we sail on as if not knowing  
for to stop means to terminate

Good bye my old companion  
how useless the flag I shall dip  
too shocked and my heart in rebellion  
I proceed with my faltering ship

For since my experience matured  
I learned the world is no toy  
and after a thousand departures  
belong to a dwindling convoy

Jan Noordsgraaf

Tekening van J. H. Kerkhof

# Convoys Brave Perilous Route Across North Atlantic - Any Day Any Hour

The SCIENTIFIC & HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE EARLY DAYS OF WIRELESS

Rendezvous with Fate Sept. 8, 1934



S.S. Morro Castle - KGOV

Picture snapped by member T.W. Braidwood - 2864-SGP, Operator on the SS Orizaba/WRN, SISTER SHIP OF THE SS Morro Castle - KWC/KGOV in 1926 as they passed 'en route'. The "Castle" burned in 1934 loss of 90 lives. Radio saved 228. Fires still an unexplained enigma caused by fire and intrigue.

★★★★★★ The "Wireless" - Our Proud Heritage! ★★★★★★

## SPARKS JOURNAL

★ ★ ★ ★ SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS, INC. ★ ★ ★ ★

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Key [SK = Silent Key, SGP = Spark Gap Pioneers, P = Pioneers, V = Veteran, M = Member, Sparks = Worked at Sea]

- (SK) Ed Raser, W2ZJ, Radio Pioneer, Sparks, SOWP #35-SGP
- (SK) Bill Gould, K2NP, Radio Pioneer, Sparks, SOWP #565-P
- (SK) Matty Camillo, W2WB, Sparks, SOWP #750-SGP
- (SK) Dare Robinson, WB2EVA, Sparks, SOWP #2284-SGP
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